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THE DEATH of the TORONTO TELEGRAM

&

other  stories

newspaper

by

JOCK CARROLL

**THE DEATH OF
THE TORONTO TELEGRAM
&
Other Newspaper Stories**

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THE DEATH OF THE TORONTO TELEGRAM & Other Newspaper Stories

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is dedicated to employees of the Toronto Telegram, past and present.

My thanks are due to many who assisted in the preparation of this chronicle: Arnold Agnew, Doug Amaron, Dennis Braithwaite, Dave Billington, Ray Bigart, John F. Bassett, Norm Betts, Doug Creighton, Vince Devitt, John Downing, Andy Donato, Elizabeth Dingman, Ron Haggart, Fred Jones, Fraser Kelly, J. D. MacFarlane, Andy MacFarlane, Colin Murray, Bob MacDonald, Wilson McConnell, Ed Monteith, Mel Morris, Pat Patterson, Don Poitras, Ron Poulton, Bob Rupert, Larry Reid, Roy Shields, Shirley Sharzer, Reuben Slonim, Peter and Yvonne Worthington, and many others.

The stories in Part Two of this book have appeared in The Toronto Telegram, Weekend Magazine, Collier's Magazine, Holiday Magazine, Sports Illustrated and Mayfair Magazine. The Death of a Dog is a chapter from the book Korean Boy. A typical Newspaper Cartoonist is from the book, 1970 Editorial Cartoons of Duncan Macpherson.

PART I

THE DEATH OF THE TORONTO TELEGRAM

Chapter 1

During John Bassett's ownership of the Toronto Telegram, from 1952 to 1971, there were many rumors that he was about to sell the newspaper.

Whenever these rumors were heard, publisher Bassett would assemble his employees in the newsroom or the large garage beside the presses and deliver an impassioned speech, ending,

"I will not sell this newspaper! My sons will not sell this newspaper! And so far as I am concerned my grandsons will not sell this newspaper!"

Things were different on the night of Friday, September 17th, 1971. The tall — six foot, four inch — figure of the publisher appeared in the newsroom shortly before midnight. He looked like death.

Tim Porter, son of columnist McKenzie Porter, was just going off duty. To Porter's greeting, Bassett mumbled, "Hi."

Then Bassett tore a strip of teletype paper from a nearby typewriter and disappeared in the direction of his own private office. There, he began typing a story for the front page of Saturday's paper. It began,

"The decision has been taken to cease publication of the Toronto Telegram."

Bassett was joined in his office by two hastily-summoned Tely executives, personnel manager, Don Poitras and managing editor, Doug Creighton, both stunned by what was happening. Bassett had also tried to contact his own son, Telegram vice-president, John F. Bassett, but without success. Young Bassett had been out playing ball with Shopsy's Senior A Fastball Team where, ironically enough, one of his teammates was Martin Goodman, managing editor of the Telegram's rival, the Toronto Daily Star.

In the silent office, Bassett's typewriter clicked on. He explained that the 96-year-old Telegram was losing \$1-million a year. He had been unable to sell it as a going concern. The decision to close the paper was the saddest he had ever had to make, in war or peace.

John Bassett was not a humble man. For him, his story ended on a strange note,

"I'm sorry, I couldn't do better."

Creighton handed the original of the historic note to Poitras. "You better keep that. We'll set from the dupe."

Managing editor Creighton was one of many Tely career men. He'd gone directly to the paper from high school, 23 years before, working his way up from suburban reporter, through police, courts and sports to his present position. His first connection with the night's events had begun when he'd arrived home late to find a note pinned to his pillow by one of his children, a note which said, "Call Big Bassett." The children identified the Bassetts as Big Bassett or Little Bassett.

Before coming to the office, Creighton had called his assistant managing editor, Ed Monteith. "There's an important announcement. You'd better come in, we may be in for a major re-make on the front page."

Monteith had first appeared at the Tely 30 years before as a copy boy during his summer holidays. He'd had no thoughts about the newspaper business, but the sight of reporters sitting around with their feet on desks and their hats on the back of their heads had caught his imagination. He finished his high school by correspondence and worked as cub reporter, on suburban news, the police beat, as cable editor, news editor, Ontario editor, at everything a man could do on a newspaper.

These two men, whose whole lives had centered on the Tely, now met at the News Desk, to handle their own obituary.

"The publisher wants it set two columns," said Creighton.

"We should hit it harder than that," said Monteith.

"All right, then let's go to three columns," said Creighton. "And he doesn't want anything else but the announcement — no long obituary."

Monteith slugged the copy "CEASE", for setting at 15 ems, 9 pt. type. He wrote a head, "The Toronto Telegram to cease publication," and marked it for setting at 15 ems, 42 pt., Bodoni Bold, for a front page box.

He was afraid to send the copy to the composing room

in case someone down there thought it was a joke, so he carried it down personally to the night foreman.

The stunning news spread quickly to the Tely employees about to lose their jobs. Including part-time help, there were about 1,350 people involved. Some were only a phone call away, but others were out of the city. Executive editor, Andy Macfarlane was in a hotel room several thousand miles away, half-way through a tour of military bases in the Mediterranean. He was given the news by CFRB news editor, Art Cole, who was on the trip and who had once been the Telegram's City Editor.

"Well," said MacFarlane, "if they haven't cancelled my credit card — I'm going to order up some champagne."

The Tely's famous sports columnist, Ted Reeve, was sitting in the Toronto Men's Press Club next day, still digesting the news. Reeve, a legendary football and lacrosse player and a Telegram institution, tossed back his usual tot of rum and tossed off another memorable quote, a complaint,

"When I joined the paper in 1923, they said it was steady work."

The Telegram was a family newspaper in more ways than one. Working there meant being a part of the Tely Family. The death of the paper was a family death.

Accountant Art Holland, 40 years with the paper, had never worked anywhere else. Columnist George Kidd was approaching his 44th Tely anniversary. Reporter Ron Poulton had been everywhere and done everything for the paper. He'd just written a book called *The Paper Tyrant*, a biography of John Ross Robertson, the man who founded the paper on April 18, 1876. Robertson put out a first edition of four pages, selling for two cents a copy.

Still at work as building manager was Charlie Prater, the last living link with the Robertson regime. Prater began work for the paper in 1913 as a sandwich boy. His wife had worked there. His brother and his brother's wife had worked there. Two cousins had worked there as printers. Right at this moment one of them was outside, walking up and down with a union placard, part of the picket line which the I.T.U. had maintained outside the plant for the past 6 years.

Inside the plant was Charlie Prater's granddaughter, Kathy Walker, at work in the financial news department. Kathy's earliest memories are of being three-years-old and phoning her grandfather, who would open the door of his office, so she could listen to the roar of the Tely presses.

For Kathy, and many others, the end of the Telegram meant the end of a world.

John Bassett's announcement appeared on the front page of the first edition of the Telegram on Saturday, September 18th, 1971. Within hours, the paper began moving toward the grave, and with bewildering rapidity.

The first edition of the Toronto Daily Star carried no news of the Telegram but the next edition had a front page headline and eight stories about the event, including a nearly full-page history of the Telegram by assistant managing editor, Jack Brehl. Between editions the Star staff must have written furiously.

There was also a front-page expression of sympathy from Beland H. Honderich, president and publisher of the Star, who added, "As the Telegram is unable to continue publication and as Mr. Bassett has been unable to sell it as a going concern, we decided that we should purchase the subscription lists."

Later, the purchase price for the Tely subscription lists was revealed to be a staggering \$10 million.

Saturday's Star even had a story on the 24-hour wake begun by Tely employees after midnight on Friday. There were many wakes where Tely people tried to drown their shock and grief.

The main gathering was at the apartment of news editor, Max Crittenden, which lasted all weekend as people came and went, leaving empty liquor bottles stacked fifty deep on the tables. The soul-searching and arguments which had racked the staff for months flared anew. There were those who believed the end had come because of John Bassett's expansion into other areas; radio, television, football and hockey. And there were those who saw it as a consequence of the union struggles for higher wages.

Eddie Rowarth, a police reporter and former boxer

smashed his fist against the wall in frustration. The glass of liquor in his hand cut him deeply.

Holding his bleeding hand, Rowarth departed for the home of publisher John Bassett on Saturday evening. An armed security guard stopped him in the driveway.

"Mr. Bassett is not receiving visitors."

Rowarth held up his hands and slapped his pockets. "No guns," he said. "No bombs."

There had been an increasing awareness of possible violence during the recent weeks of union negotiations at the Tely. There had been press stoppages and a number of pressmen fired for "negligence." At one point a bomb threat had been received at the Telegram building at 440 Front Street West. Security men had been summoned to check the building, but the building had not been cleared, nor the employees informed of the threat, a fact which angered some.

The security man said to Rowarth, "Mr. Bassett is leaving the house in a few minutes. You can see him when he comes out."

When Bassett appeared, Rowarth shouted, "Mr. Bassett."

Looking down at Rowarth, Bassett said, "Do I know you?"

"You may not know me," said Rowarth. "I've only been with the Tely for two years. I quit the Star after 20 years to come to the Tely — because I believed in you as a man."

According to Rowarth, Bassett replied shortly, "You should have stayed at the Star."

Bassett was joined by his new, young wife, Isobel, a former Tely reporter. Back at the wake, Rowarth told friends he shouted unprintable remarks at them as they drove off. Like many, Rowarth was torn apart that night by grief and anger.

Chapter 2

This brief account of events at the Telegram was gathered and written in the three weeks following John Bassett's announcement. The paper is still publishing daily. The official closing has been set for October 30th, still some week away, but the end now seems certain.

It concerns me personally because I will be one of some 1,350 Telegram employees joining the ranks of the unemployed. For the past year I have been working at the Telegram as a feature writer. For the past 20 years, as a writer for Weekend Magazine, my work has been appearing in the Saturday editions of the Telegram.

Beyond the personal disasters involved, I feel the loss of the third largest newspaper in Canada is a social calamity.

My daughter woke me at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 18th, to tell me of the closing announcement, which she had heard on the radio. It was not a working day for me, but she is an 18-year-old high school student who works Saturdays in the classified advertising department of the Toronto Daily Star.

The news did not exactly surprise me. The previous Wednesday, much to the consternation of nearby fellow workers, I had cleaned out my desk, packed my personal files in a cardboard box, and taken them home at the end of the day. That day, in a last meeting with union officials before a strike-authorization vote was to be taken, John Bassett had said,

"You'll have to take whatever steps you feel are necessary and so will I."

He added that the following week he would cease to recognize the Guild contract and cease deducting union dues from employee pay cheques.

On the Saturday of the announcement, I read various editions of the Star and Tely and that evening went down to the Tely building to see if there were any later developments. An eerie scene met my eyes when I entered the Tely newsroom just before 9:00 p.m.

There was not a single person to be seen.

The photo department was deserted, the sports department was deserted. In the whole, huge newsroom there were only empty desks and silent typewriters. There were two sounds, the radio blaring police calls as usual and a single telephone ringing persistently.

I sat down at my desk to type a few notes.

A few minutes later Tely photographer Norman Betts arrived. He could not see me because of a large pillar and he experienced the same strange sensation of coming upon a ghost newspaper. Hearing my typewriter, he rushed down the aisle and asked,

"What the hell's happening? Where is everybody?"

He'd been out of town, shooting hockey pictures for a Tely promotion, and hadn't heard about the closing.

His reaction was, "Oh, shit, no."

Next he answered the ringing telephone. It was an angry lady, angry because two comic pages were missing from her Saturday paper. Betts calmed her, then took some photos of the deserted newsroom. Earlier that week Betts had shot pictures of publisher Bassett seated at a typewriter in the newsroom. A furious Bassett had been typing out another front-page story, an apology for late delivery of the Tely which was caused by press "breakdowns."

On the bulletin board Betts and I found an invitation to the first Tely wake which was underway at Crittenden's apartment. When we left the wake, Betts used the farewell he always used.

"So long. Write if you get work."

This night it wasn't funny.

I went home and began writing this story.

* * *

John White Hughes Bassett was the Toronto Telegram for nearly 20 years.

He's a tall man, standing six feet, four inches. He looms larger than life and he plays the part to the hilt.

Most people like him, or hate him.

He is the son of a newspaperman, one who became president and publisher of the Montreal Gazette and who

owned the Sherbrooke Daily Record. Over the years he's mixed with the rich and famous. Anthony Eden, Lord Beaverbrook, Robert Kennedy, George Plimpton. When he went to work as a young reporter, it was for millionaire George McCullaugh of The Globe and Mail.

A student of history, he's always been interested in politics. He sounded the drums for George McCullaugh's Leadership League, a movement which painted George McCullaugh as a jockey galloping to the leadership of Canada astride the Canadian people. The people turned down the part of the horse.

After a distinguished army career John Bassett returned to Sherbrooke and ran for office as a returned soldier candidate. Again, he was rejected. He bought the Sherbrooke Daily Record from his father and became publisher, at the age of 32.

If you were a friend of John Bassett, you would see his role as publisher-politician as simply the role of an involved, committed man. If you were an enemy, you would see it as a propagation of class interests.

Bassett had his own code of newspaper ethics. Doug Amaron, now General Superintendent of the Canadian Press, was once Bassett's editor on the Sherbrooke Record. One day Amaron ran a round-up of opinion from across the country, including Liberal Party opinions.

He got an angry phone call from the Conservative political organizer who had managed Bassett's campaign. The man said, "I am going to phone Bassett tomorrow. And tomorrow you will be out of a job."

The organizer did phone Bassett. Bassett phoned Amaron.

"You're running the paper," said Bassett. "Never mind him."

Bob Perry, now managing editor of the Financial Post was a young reporter at Sherbrooke. He and Amaron agree it was a wonderful place to work, despite Bassett's overwhelming nature and occasional impulsiveness.

Bassett ran the paper the way he was to run the Telegram in later years. As his sports editor at Sherbrooke he hired Len O'Donnell, a man who had never written for publication in his life. But he had been Bassett's football

coach at Bishop's College in Lennoxville. His advertising manager saw the vital role played by advertising as "a lot of bullshit."

Amaron himself still wonders why Bassett hired him to edit the Sherbrooke paper. He thinks it may have been for one of two reasons:

Amaron played football against Bassett's Bishop's College and they were both sidelined with injuries the same day. Or it may have been because Amaron and Bassett sank together on the Santa Elena when it was torpedoed en route to Naples during the war.

"Or maybe there was another reason," says Amaron. "I did use to date Frederica Bradley."

Frederica Bradley was a sister of Moira Bradley, the dentist's daughter who became John Bassett's first wife.

North Hatley, 15 miles from Sherbrooke, was a summer resort for the wealthy. One day in North Hatley a man picked up the phone and told the operator to call the police.

"I've just shot my wife," he said, "and I'm about to shoot myself."

"Naturally," says Doug Amaron, "the operator called John Bassett before calling the police."

By the time the police arrived at the scene of the crime, John Bassett and his business manager, Ivan Saunders, had finished their work. They'd stolen pictures for the paper and made notes about the two bodies lying there, apparently dead.

Amaron was on holidays and Bassett ran the headline, "NORTH HATLEY MAN SLAYS WIFE SHOOTSELF."

Unfortunately the man was not dead. He recovered in the hospital and Amaron had visions of the paper being hit with a million dollar libel suit.

But all ended happily. The man, whose provocation had been great, was not brought to trial for murder. He left North Hatley quietly.

John Bassett left for Toronto when George McCullaugh bought the Toronto Telegram on November 25th, 1948, for \$3,610,000. McCullaugh brought Bassett to the Telegram as a director and general manager. On McCullaugh's

death in 1952, Bassett bought the paper for a reported \$4-million.

As a publisher, Bassett believed in personal journalism. At least once, he shouted, "There's only one editor of this paper! I'm the editor!"

Other editors might hear from him by phone at any hour of the day or night. A group of them met with him daily at 11:30 a.m. They assembled in a large, bright board room next to Bassett's private office. On the walls hung two small paintings of preceding publishers, John Ross Robertson and George McCullaugh. But the painting which dominated the board room was a large one of John Bassett. It was a bright, bold painting, done in 1956, a head-and-shoulders of a young, handsome, muscular John Bassett, staring the world in the eye. If the painter, Arpens, had only painted in the brilliant Bassett smile, it might have won a prize as a Soviet poster.

Seated around the table, waiting for Bassett to burst through the connecting door from his own office, would be editors Arnold Agnew, Fraser Kelly, Reuben Slonim, Harvey Currell, Peter Dempson, Frederick Nossall and political cartoonist Yardley Jones.

The editors never knew how their day would begin. Through the wall they might hear Bassett tearing the hide from some hapless reporter, because an important point was missing from his story.

On some such occasions Bassett would tear the newspaper in two, throw the pieces on the floor and jump up and down on them, a giant in a temper tantrum.

If the reporter dared to point out that the missing fact was down in paragraph three, Bassett would shift ground.

"WHY THE HELL ISN'T IT IN PARAGRAPH ONE WHERE IT BELONGS?"

The Bassett tantrums generally ended as quickly as they began. He might now stride into the boardroom with the latest joke. He liked jokes and told them well. He startled staid editors with comments on his personal love life.

"Well, gentlemen, what have we today?"

From Yardley Jones, the paper's political cartoonist, he'd take a rough sketch of the day's cartoon. If he

disliked the idea, the sketch would slowly be crumpled into a ball in his large fist and tossed over his shoulder.

"Back to the drawing board, Yardley."

While outlining the day's editorials Bassett would prowling back and forth at the head of the table, pausing often to peer out the window through the venetian blinds. Opposed, Bassett would shout louder and turn the board room blue with four-letter words.

Editor-in-chief, Arnold Agnew said, "John did not run the paper as a dictator—even though he voted *louder* than anyone else."

According to political editor, Fraser Kelly, Bassett won most of the shouting matches simply because he was better-informed and more articulate than most of his editors. And he could, at times, be persuaded to change his mind.

One famous day he found a story in the Toronto Daily Star which was not in that day's Telegram. He summoned four editors to his office and before they could say a word, he launched himself into a long tirade on their incompetence and stupidity.

When Bassett finally paused for breath, editor-in-chief J. D. MacFarlane said quietly,

"Mr. Publisher, the reason that story isn't in the Telegram today is that we had it in yesterday."

Without a pause, Bassett turned on the blinding Bassett smile and said,

"Gentlemen, happiness is a day when the publisher is full of shit."

If it was a dictatorship, some freedoms flourished especially in later years. Bassett firmly believed the editorial page belonged to him. But the Telegram stable of columnists possibly represented a wider range of view than any paper in North America.

There was McKenzie Porter, the Queen Victoria of columnists, propping up a bygone society, raising the hackles of working men and occasionally mounting brilliant attacks on the editors and publishers who clung to his coat-tails. At the other end, where it was all at, was Girleo Gale Garnett, known in the office as the World's Oldest Hippie, writing about staring into the eyes of he

partners while in the act of love and not seeing herself reflected there. Three times a week she appeared with new discoveries, Love, Sex, Antiques, Andy Warhol, Summer Cottages.

Politically, Lubor J. Zink flailed at communism wherever it raised its ugly head. N.D.P. member Douglas Fisher and Conservative Dalton Camp appeared cheek by jowl. And two tireless ombudsmen, Ron Haggart and Frank Drea, rode almost daily into the lists on behalf of the poor and the weak.

Life was never dull. He abused some executives to the point where they began to look like Bassett hounds. He also gave them company cars, junkets and wild nights on the town when his money kept the band playing on . . . and on . . .

One day he called production manager, Larry Reid into his office and introduced him to that grey eminence of the Conservative Party, lawyer Eddy Goodman.

Bassett said, "I want you to give Mr. Goodman all the help you can with this literature he's getting out."

Reid followed instructions. Some weeks later, when the bills came in, he was summoned to the publisher's office.

Bassett shook a handful of bills in the air. He shouted. "Look at this! That Goodman printing has cost me \$12,000! Do you realize what you've done?"

"Yes, sir," said Reid. "I did it because you told me to do it."

Larry Reid is a small man, a foot shorter than John Bassett. Bassett advanced on Reid, holding the bills over his head like a sword. He thrust his face close to Reid's face, and screamed,

"THEN DON'T PAY ANY FUCKING ATTENTION TO ME!"

Chapter 3

Did the unions kill the Toronto Telegram?

John Bassett's abrupt Friday-night decision to close the paper, coming within 24 hours of a union strike-authorization vote, left many with this impression.

Telegram union agreements had expired at the end of 1970. During the early months of 1971, the Council of Toronto Newspaper Unions had negotiated with management, but had concentrated on first obtaining a new agreement with the Toronto Daily Star, which had a net profit of \$3-million in 1970.

In June, Star workers won a general wage increase of \$40, a week spread over 2 years.

Union negotiators now pressed the Telegram for an equal raise, despite the fact that the Tely had lost \$1-million in 1970.

The Telegram workers were divided. There were those who could not believe John Bassett could not afford a raise. They had watched his empire spread from the Telegram to a major interest in Maple Leaf Gardens and the Toronto Argonauts; to ownership of CFTO-TV, reputedly the most profitable TV station in Canada; to a string of weekly newspapers and to other TV and film companies.

The newspaper people, traditionally low-paid, felt they were neglected, in a time of rising living costs. The key-rate for Guild members was \$190, a week, minimum for reporters with 5 years' experience. At the Tely, this minimum was most often regarded as the maximum.

Tiny Bennett, the huge, bearded Telegram outdoors writer had quit only a few weeks before over wages. For the Tely Tiny Bennett wrote three columns a week. He wrote features on allied subjects such as environmental conferences. He made radio and TV appearances. His column was sold by the Tely Syndicate to other papers, for which he received no extra pay. He was the figurehead for The Unpolluters, a Tely promotion campaign. He was an erudite man, of considerable previous experience, with

seven books to his credit, the latest a beautiful book called "The Art of Angling".

After 13 years at the Tely, his take-home pay was averaging \$143. a week.

After 13 years at the Tely, he was earning \$1000. a year less than he'd earned there in 1966.

The memo he received in reply to his request for a raise was so insensitive his wife cried when she read it at the kitchen table.

Tiny Bennett quit.

He is having the memo framed.

* * *

There were others, mostly older employees, who felt the Telegram offered more than money. It was an exciting place to work. There was a feeling of warmth and humanity lacking in those papers run by computer.

More than the militants, this group was sensitive to the poor economic climate and to Tely financial problems. The Tely raced the Star—a strike would end that race forever.

The day of the strike vote Dennis Braithwaite wrote a column about the Depression years and announced that the Second Great Depression had begun. He advised, "If you have a job, any job, hang on to it."

He was speaking directly to the union members meeting that night, Thursday, September 16th. The meeting took place in the Crystal Ballroom of the King Edward Hotel.

It was a noisy, jammed meeting, all seats taken, the balcony overflowing, many standing at the rear. The motion before the meeting was to empower union negotiators to call a strike, if necessary.

On the platform was the negotiating committee of the Council of Toronto Newspaper Unions, representing the Pressmen's Union, the Stereotypers' Union and the Newspaper Guild. The Guild unit at the Tely embraced editorial employees, business office employees and the truck drivers and "hoppers" who delivered the paper.

Chairman Robert Pryor, president of the Pressmen's Union, brought some kind of order to the meeting and

described the last meeting with John Bassett, which had taken place the day before. Union auditors had inspected the Telegram's books and confirmed Tely losses. With Bassett refusing a pay raise for 1971, the union had countered with an offer to take an "I.O.U." for that period, a reasonable position in contrast to "the irresponsible and unconcerned position taken by Mr. Bassett."

Bassett had said to union negotiators, "You'll have to take whatever steps you feel are necessary and so will I."

Robert Rupert, international representative of the Newspaper Guild, told the noisy meeting it could be argued that The Telegram would not be in financial trouble if Mr. Bassett chose key executives more on their ability "to run a newspaper and less on their willingness to flatter the boss and belong to the right club."

He spoke to the motion. First in the line-up was Tely columnist

There were floor microphones for union members to speak to the motion. First in the line-up was Tely columnist Dennis Braithwaite. Braithwaite was a former president of the Toronto Newspaper Guild—but he was dead against the strike-authorization vote. He tried to state his reasons but was drowned out by shouts and boos from the audience.

Food editor Helen Gagen also warned against a strike. "If it happens, you and I will be out there shovelling snow for a living. That may be all right for some of you younger people—but not people my age."

She was booed.

Reporter Peter Worthington took the floor. "If the way you are conducting this meeting, Mr. Chairman, is a sample of your negotiations with John Bassett, it is a wonder you got anywhere at all."

Speaking against a strike, Worthington suggested Bassett was deliberately trying to provoke a confrontation and that the union should not fall into the Bassett trap. This was a current view at the paper, where it was felt John Bassett would find it easier to sell the paper to some publisher like Lord Thomson of Fleet, if he first got rid of the unionized Tely employees.

Despite these voices, emotion and union solidarity carried the day.

Reporter John Marshall, with his own share of white hair, brushed aside the problems of shovelling snow.

"Let me say, I would rather be out shovelling snow than on the paper the way it is being run now!"

A truck driver shouted, "He can find money for Bator Broadcasting, for Argonaut football players, LET HIM FIND MONEY FOR THE TELEGRAM!"

The Telegram's crusading columnist, Ron Haggart received the most applause.

Haggart argued that John L. Lewis had saved the coal mining industry in the United States, by forcing the owners to learn to operate efficiently. His rousing climax

"Bassett pays the going rate for his newsprint, for his ink and all his other supplies. If we force him to pay the going rate for his employees—we will force him to run the paper efficiently!"

When the ballots were counted, the Newspaper Guild authorized "strike-if-necessary" action, voting 298 YES, 111 NO. Voting separately, the Pressmen's Union voted 75 to 1 in favor. The vote of the Stereotypers' Union to be held later and was not expected to change the result.

Despite the YES vote, the Tely staff was still divided and confused.

Police reporter Kesley Merry, a huge, intense bespectacled young man, typified the state of mind. On his first appearance at the floor microphones, Merry spoke against strike action.

Later in the meeting, he jumped to his feet and said, "I was wrong! Voting against a strike will destroy the union! We must stand together!"

After the vote, other writers upbraided him for his vacillation and also for being in favor of a fatal strike.

"I know," said Merry. "But when the ballots came around, I voted *against* a strike anyway."

* * *

While the ballots were being counted in the Crystal Ballroom at the King Edward Hotel, John Bassett was finishing his dinner at an elegant restaurant called Mister Tony's on the edge of Toronto's Yorkville Village. Bassett was the guest of his red-headed, 42-year-old managing

editor, J. Douglas Creighton and of Fraser Kelly, the paper's political editor.

The timing of the dinner, which included their wives, was accidental. Creighton and Kelly had often been guests of John and Isobel Bassett. Two weeks earlier, they'd asked if they could return the favor.

Kelly and his wife Joan reached Mister Tony's first. When Kelly ordered a Brandy Alexander, her husband a martini, Kelly would have cause to remember their private toast.

"Here's to the Telegram."

Shortly after eight o'clock, they were joined by Creighton, his blonde wife, Marilyn and the Bassetts. Bassett was in a good mood, full of loud jokes and laughter. The Brandy Alexander on the table reminded him of a hotel in wartime Italy where the house record for Brandy Alexanders was 17—until the day when he personally dined 18 of them.

"I had no trouble sleeping," he boomed, "and it was in the middle of the day."

Tonight he drank beer until just before dinner, when he ordered his favorite pre-dinner drink: a chilled martini in a tall glass, no ice.

When it came with a twist of lemon, he picked the lemon out as if it were a worm. "If I'd wanted *lemonade*," he said, "I'd have ordered *lemonade*!"

There is no menu at Mister Tony's—the waiter simply tells you what is available. If the price is a matter of concern to you, you shouldn't be at Mister Tony's.

Joan Kelly had Alaska King Crab; Kelly and Isobel Bassett ordered Surf & Turf, a filet with lobster tails; the Creightons, Chateaubriand.

John Bassett had sole Meunière, sole seasoned and fried in butter. Creighton ordered two bottles of Pouilly-Fuisse, one of the finest white burgundies, made from the best Chardonnay grape.

The bill came to \$146.01.

* * *

Isobel Bassett glowed during dinner. She is 20 years younger than her husband, a Queen's graduate,

formerly married to Crawford Gordon, Jr., a stockbroker friend of John F. Bassett, the oldest Bassett son.

She was teaching at Humberside Collegiate when, at a party, she told John F. Bassett she was looking for something more interesting to do. He found her a job as a Telegram reporter, where Isobel soon caught the eye of his father, and others.

In 1965 she was chosen as the Tely's representative in the Miss By-Line Contest, a talent and beauty contest staged at the By-Line Ball, with entrants from Toronto newspapers, radio and television stations.

Isobel won the contest and was named Miss By-Line of 1965. There is no doubt she had what it took. One of the judges in the contest said, "It's the first time we've ever chosen a married woman as *Miss By-Line*," a point also overlooked in choosing her *Miss Telegram*, the Telegram's entrant.

Bassett's divorce from his first wife, Eleanor Moira Bradley, created friction in the family. They had been married on the 26th of April, 1938, when John Bassett was 22 years of age. They'd had three sons, John F. Bassett, Douglas and David.

Some saw his second marriage as a search for his lost youth and noticed a striking change in his life style after he married Isobel. Once the classic swinger, he now became the classic, attentive husband. He called home four times a day. He dashed home for lunch. He and Isobel adopted two girls and he began spending his evenings at home, or taking her out to the parties she enjoyed. At one party, Bassett explained his constant attendance.

"I have to keep an eye on her, you know. After all, that's how I got her."

Isobel liked to travel. They travelled. Together.

The new domesticity of the aging John Bassett brought an amusing turn to the home life of his eldest son, John F. Bassett. Johnny F. was married to Susan Carling, of the brewing family.

"In the old days," complained Johnny F., "when I used to raise a little hell, Susan would shout at me, 'You're getting just like your father!' Now, when I do the same

thing, she says, 'Why can't you be more like your father?' I can't win, thanks to him."

At Mister Tony's, on the night of the union vote, there was no shop talk at the Bassett table, until Creighton was called to the phone. Bassett followed him and watched as Creighton scribbled down the result of the union vote on a piece of paper. Bassett then phoned his personnel manager Don Poitras, in charge of union negotiations for the company. Creighton talked to an editor at the City Desk. Between their phone calls, the phone rang with an incoming call. Bassett, never able to resist a ringing phone, picked it up and said,

"Mister Tony's!"

It was a girl reporter from the Star. She said, "I understand Mr. John Bassett is dining there tonight—"

"Speaking!" boomed Bassett. It took the girl a moment to collect herself and get a comment for her paper.

Back at the table the most visibly upset man was political editor Fraser Kelly. A career man, he loved the paper. For weeks he had lived in dread of a strike. Over the brandy, he turned to Bassett and said:

"All right, do you mind if I ask some questions? First, there are a lot of people on the paper who think you just don't give a shit any more. Secondly, they believe you have either sold the paper, or are about to sell the paper. Thirdly, regardless of the strike vote tonight, the Tely is dead."

Bassett looked him in the eye. "You're right," he said, "on all counts."

A different John Bassett.

* * *

Twenty-four hours after he left Mister Tony's, John Bassett appeared in the Tely newsroom to type out his front-page decision to close the paper. The swiftness of events took even Creighton and Kelly by surprise.

The reason for the speed in making the announcement would be known to at least two people, publisher John Bassett of the Telegram and publisher Beland Honderich of the Toronto Daily Star. But they were not making themselves available for interviews during this period.

It would appear an agreement had already been reached regarding the sale of the Telegram's subscription lists to the Toronto Star for \$10-million. When such news became public there would probably be a rise in the value of shares in the Toronto Star.

In fact, on Friday, September 17th, Toronto Star stock, Class B, moved upward from \$25. to \$25.60. Trading in Star stock was superseded on the Toronto Stock Exchange the following Monday. When trading resumed in the stock, at 10:45 a.m. Tuesday, September 21st, the Star Class B stock moved to a high of \$32.50 and closed at \$31.50 . . . a gain of \$5. a share over the previous week.

Chapter 4

The decision to close the Telegram had been made some time before the union strike-authorization vote. Despite this fact, in the first few days following the closing announcement, a bitter feeling persisted that union negotiating attitudes had brought down the paper.

Madison Sale, long-time Tely photographer, read the latest union announcement on the paper's bulletin board.

"The thinking men," he said bitterly. "They're the ones that did this to us. *The stinking men!*"

McKenzie Porter, arch-Conservative, had his next three columns killed. In them, he blamed the unions and the new, young breed of militant reporters, the long-haired, bearded boys and the grim young girls who'd burned their brassieres.

It was management who refused to print the columns.

As union supporters began desperate attempts to find alternatives and save the paper, Dennis Braithwaite wrote scathingly in his column of "the elephants trying to cover their tracks."

Executive editor Andy MacFarlane, back from the Mediterranean, confronted Ron Haggart in the newsroom. MacFarlane was still in a state of angry shock.

He said to Haggart, "Trying to save the Telegram, eh? Save it from what? Yourself?"

He stomped away.

Peter Worthington, star Tely writer, and a loyal Bassett supporter to the end, nevertheless said,

"When the battle is lost, it's the general who must take the blame."

Bassett admitted privately that, for this action, he would be receiving no medals.

Was it true, as the unions charged, that the death of the Telegram was caused by the general's mismanagement?

As a general, John Bassett was arrogant, soft-hearted, impulsive, calculating, boorish, charming, selfish, generous, unforgiving, loyal, a hedonist, a puritan, a man who could see a long way ahead, a man who wanted every-

thing done yesterday. He was a man with ideas, an enlightened man. He was a man with the instincts of a robber-baron. He was a frustrated general, a man who would be king. A contradictory man.

He was John Bassett and he published John Bassett's newspaper.

An absentee owner?

In recent years, this charge gathered some truth. A new wife, a new family, expanding business interests in a dozen fields. Even John Bassett could be only one place at a time.

His editors today still dispute the charge. To them he was never any farther away than the telephone.

During the FLQ crisis last fall CBC parliamentary correspondent, Tim Ralfe pressed Trudeau during an on-camera interview, asking the Prime Minister just how far he was prepared to go with emergency measures.

A tight-lipped Trudeau said, "Well, just watch me."

Soon Bassett was on the phone to CFTO-TV news director Ted Steubing, with instructions. He did not want his tv interviewers hassling with Trudeau about how far he would go with emergency measures. Bassett was gung-ho on emergency measures, the way things were handled in the army. It was the right thing to do, even if a Liberal prime minister was doing it.

"Very well," said Steubing. "But I've got Fraser Kelly on the other line right now. You know his views. He's just told me he's taping a tough story, about Trudeau over-reacting."

"That's all right!" roared Bassett. "He's political editor and can say what he likes. But just tell him for me this time he's full of shit!"

He was a politician-publisher to the end and certainly was influential in the Conservative party. After his 1945 loss in Sherbrooke, he did not run again until the Federal election of 1962, in the Spadina riding of Toronto.

He ran as only John Bassett would run. He knocked on doors but he arrived in one of his cars. No sense walking when you have a limousine once owned by Lady Beaverbrook, a Bentley, a Thunderbird, a Lincoln Continental

and a special \$35,000. Rolls-Royce Convertible, just like Budd Rieger's.

In the Spadina garment district, John Bassett was too big, too good-looking, too powerful, too much his own man to win an election. He was defeated by an unknown, Perry Ryan, a Liberal who later crossed the house to become a Conservative.

In the newspaper business there has always been a kind of underground poetry, cynical, satirical, sometimes bawdy, mocking the greats of the world.

Bassett entered these misty halls of fame when he lost the Spadina election. The late Walter O'Hearn, then editor of the Montreal Star, immortalized Bassett with a poem called, "Lament For a Maker." A copy eventually came into Bassett's hands. He read:

LAMENT FOR A MAKER

All hail to Toronto, the city of gold
Big League (though its baseball is minor,)
Some critics have said that Toronto is cold.
(But they warmed Bassett's hide in Spadina.)

You may talk about Winnipeg, Medicine Hat,
Some Westerners boast of Regina.
Toronto is modest, its only boast that
John Bassett was licked in Spadina.

Prince Albert was loyal to Johnny the Dief,
And in every club car and diner,
The Tories clink glasses, for John is still Chief.
(But Bassett hit out in Spadina.)

Poor Douglas is beaten and Michener's through
But neither of these is a whiner.
And Bassett, to give him what credit is due,
Was game when he lost in Spadina.

Oh, I could prolong this for many a verse,
Having once been a penny-a-liner.
But the gist of my ballad is simple and terse —
Our Bassett is out in Spadina.

So back to the Telegram, shocking and pink,
And eyeing new fences to straddle.
The wage-slaves must sweat and Bert Richardson think,
Now Bassett is back in the saddle.

L'ENVOI

Oh, some men seek money, and some men seek fame,
And some the elusive vagina.
And some seek adventure — but what's in a name?
John Bassett was screwed in Spadina.

Bassett roared with laughter, had the poem framed and hung it on his study wall. He still hasn't given up the idea of being elected to parliament.

* * *

Bassett's impatience was frequently reflected in his operation of the paper. In 1957 he launched the Sunday Telegram, against the wishes of editor J. D. MacFarlane. It was still against Ontario law, and MacFarlane wanted the law changed first. Bassett pressed ahead in late spring, at a time when people were warming up to long summer weekends—at the cottage. The Globe and Mail and the Toronto Daily Star both fattened their Saturday editions. Finding newsboys for Sunday delivery proved another problem. By the time the Sunday Telegram was abandoned, it had cost close to \$1-million.

Just one year ago there was a crash program to launch Toronto Week, a glossy magazine supplement designed to attract national color advertising. Unfortunately magazine advertising had been shrinking. And Toronto Week was launched just too late for the fall ad agency budgets.

While the magazine was celebrating its first anniversary last week, the business office was calculating a \$750,000. loss.

John Bassett was a paternalistic, but dictatorial employer. Nancy Phillips, wife of Derek Phillips, first grandson of Colonel Sam McLaughlin of General Motors, was a Telegram columnist from 1957 to 1964. She was also acting as a hostess on one of Bassett's CFTO-TV shows.

A misunderstanding arose in which Nancy felt her posi-

tion was being misrepresented. A temperamental girl, Nancy sat down at home and wrote Bassett an angry ultimatum:

"Unless you give me a hearing, I'll never write another word for the Telegram."

She put the note in a cab and sent it to John Bassett.

Twenty minutes later another cab was at her door, this one with a note from John Bassett.

It said: "We're going to miss you, Nancy."

Nancy Phillips laughed, then cried. "I don't necessarily like the son-of-a-bitch," she says today. "But I admire him. And I really loved those years at the Tely."

In 1963 Bassett moved the Telegram from Bay and Melinda to a bright modern three-storey newspaper building at 440 Front St. West. As usual the Tely was trying to do several things at once. John Bassett was an enthusiastic man. They were shifting the paper to new million-dollar presses, on which the bugs had not yet been ironed out. They were trying to introduce ROP color into the pages of the daily. And they were trying to re-section the paper according to a glossy, artist's conception done by Tely artist Andy Donato. It looked great but it caused Percy Rowe to cry once, "It looks great—but where in the hell do we put the news?"

For months the Telegram suffered press breakdowns and was late in delivery. It didn't help circulation.

John Bassett pressed ahead on all fronts. The new building was bright, white and efficient. So bright Ted Reeve said, "All the reporters are coming down with snow blindness."

Bassett commissioned sculptor Gerry Gladstone to create a bronze fountain at the entrance of the new building. And it was done. Bassett commissioned artist Harold Town to execute a monster mural in the foyer. And it was done. Bassett ordered a bust of John Ross Robertson to be placed at the head of the escalators leading to the executive suite. And it was done.

Then John Bassett looked around and saw all the things that he had made and they were very good.

Except for one thing . . . in the executive suite, the secretaries were smoking cigarettes at their desks.

John Bassett smoked moderately, less than a package of Matinees per day. But it was not right for the secretaries to smoke in the executive suite. It gave the public a bad impression of the Toronto Telegram. So he went unto the secretaries and told them they must no longer smoke at their desks.

And it was *nearly* done.

Joan Cannington put her ashtray in the drawer of her desk and ducked her head when she smoked. She had been with John Bassett for many years. Others went to the washroom to smoke.

All except one, whose name was Jean Burlington. She had smoked at her desk at the Telegram for 17 years.

The first time John Bassett caught her smoking at her desk, he bawled her out in front of the others. The second time he roared, "Now, I'm making this an order!"

"The hell with you, John Bassett!" cried Jean Burlington. "I quit!"

People told John Bassett he couldn't let this happen.

"After all . . . 17 years with the Tely. . ."

"The hell with her!" shouted John Bassett. "Let her quit. She defied my orders!"

* * *

John Basset was not all bad. He was not all good either. No man is.

Not even J. Douglas MacFarlane. The editor of the Maple Leaf overseas, City Editor of the Globe and Mail. MacFarlane was brought to the Telegram at the same time as John Bassett—when George McCullaugh bought it. To many, for 20 years, MacFarlane was the real Toronto Telegram. When he left the Telegram he was editor-in-chief and vice-president. John Bassett had told him one day he'd be publisher. When it didn't work out that way, he asked Bassett about it.

"People change their minds," said John Bassett.

J. Douglas MacFarlane was himself a formidable man, nearly as big as John Bassett. People called him "J.D.M.", or sometimes, behind his back, they called him McSnarly.

He was a hard-boiled editor with a heart of gold, straight from *The Front Page*. During big stories he was everywhere in the newsroom, on the phone at the City

Desk, checking photo layouts, or bolting directly to the composing room. When the passenger ship, the Noronic, burned at a Toronto berth on September 17th, 1949, with a loss of 119 lives, it was MacFarlane who took charge. When Hurricane Hazel struck Toronto in October of 1954, killing 98 people, it was MacFarlane who took charge.

He hated the Toronto Daily Star and spent his prime in trying to drive the Tely up and beyond it. The Toronto Star of Joseph Atkinson, of Harry Hindmarsh, and later of Beland Honderich was a ruthless competitor.

It was one of the last great exponents of razzle-dazzle journalism. In its heyday stories would be blanketed with teams of Star reporters and photographers. Huge promotion contests were used to buy readers, who were then fed their daily rations of sob-stories and sensationalism.

During the early thirties the Star had been running such series as the Life of Christ, the Life of Edith Cavell and Dickens' Love Letters. Two Toronto writers, Dan McArthur and J. L. Charlesworth, dashed off a famous newspaper poem which was sung at depression bottle-parties to the tune of "Bonnie Dundee."

In September of 1962, although he was no longer fighting that kind of Toronto Star, MacFarlane reprinted the poem in his newsroom bulletin for Tely staffers:

AD ASTRA

To Hindmarsh and Knowles Mr. Atkinson spoke—
"If we don't sell more papers The Star will go broke;
"I've got three super-salesmen who say they can sell—
"They're Jesus and Dickens and Edith Cavell."

Chorus—

So fill up the columns with sob-stuff and sex,
Shed tears by the bucket and sobs by the pecks,
Let the presses revolve like the mill-tails of Hell
For Jesus and Dickens and Edith Cavell!

"This Jesus is gentle, surround him with tots,
The Mayor and his kiddies should make some good
shots—

Get letters from Cody and Joey Flavelle
On Jesus and Dickens and Edith Cavell."

Chorus—Repeat

"As a lover this Dickens is really the bunk,
His letters are long and his technique is punk,
But he looks kinda sexy, his whiskers are swell;
Besides, we've got Jesus and Edith Cavell."

Chorus—Repeat

"Edith Cavell is the best of the lot,
It's always hot news when a woman gets shot,
Get plenty of pictures for those that can't spell
Of Jesus and Dickens and Edith Cavell."

Chorus—Repeat

So hey for the paper that strives for the best,
If Jesus makes good we'll put over Mae West,
With cuties and comics and corpses and smell
And Jesus and Dickens and Edith Cavell.

On Friday, November 22, 1963, the news flash came that John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States, had been shot.

The first wire news was scrambled, contradictory, at times almost unintelligible. It came in the afternoon, too late for all but the Tely's final edition.

"J.D.M." appeared in the newsroom, took off his coat, and sat down. What followed may have been one of the last great virtuoso performances of its kind. MacFarlane began tearing pages out of the previous edition. With the stock market crashing, with pandemonium in Dallas and Washington, he began a fantastic race against time.

There were reaction stories to be obtained from Washington, from the President's brother, Robert Kennedy; from Pearson in Ottawa, from the man in the street. Wire-photos. A story on the Kennedy clan from the record room. Reporters and photographers to be gotten on planes. Previous assassinations. A headline that covered half the front page. Everything, immediately.

According to North American editor Pat Patterson, MacFarlane's Tely Final was on the streets that day 40 minutes ahead of the Toronto Star.

And then, almost immediately began the all-night session in preparation for the tremendous coverage in the next day's editions, which were the equal of anything in North America.

MacFarlane drove himself harder than anyone, and sometimes he drove too hard. He had an intercom system which reached the desks of his editors. They might be in the midst of a fast-breaking story, or talking to an outside visitor, when the squawk box on their desk would snarl,

"There's a typo on Page Two, Column Three. Get it fixed."

When "J.D.M." left the Tely, the squawk boxes were the first things to follow.

His departure was slow in the making, but abrupt at the end. John Bassett had married again. He'd been kicked by his own horse, which caused a painful knee injury. At times he seemed even more arbitrary and capricious.

Staffers moonlighted, of course, to supplement Tely salaries. One, Pat Patterson, wrote a profile on John David Eaton for the New York Times.

"That should have been checked with me!" stormed Bassett. "I am intimately involved with these people!"

On September 13th, 1969, Weekend Magazine, the Montreal-produced supplement carried in Saturday's Tely, appeared with an article on homosexuality. By today's standards it was a mild story.

But it enraged Bassett. He hired temporary help to work all night tearing the offending pages out of Weekend before they reached Tely readers.

MacFarlane, the man who stood up to him, was involved in more and more shouting matches.

On October 14th, 1969, MacFarlane was sitting in his office when Bassett strode in.

"We're retiring you," said Bassett. "You're running out of steam."

MacFarlane was shocked even more next morning when he read a story about his retirement in the Globe and

Mail. A reporter asked Bassett when MacFarlane's retirement would become effective.

Bassett replied, "I guess as soon as he can pack his things."

Bassett did apologize to MacFarlane for this insensitive remark, but the severance arrangement he offered seemed equally cold-blooded. J. D. MacFarlane, editor-in-chief and vice-president, a friend and employee for 20 years, the man who had run out of steam, would lose his severance benefits if he went to work for any other Toronto newspaper.

"That ends my career here," said MacFarlane.

"That's the way it is," said Bassett.

When MacFarlane was packing his things, production manager Larry Reid came in to say goodbye.

MacFarlane was cleaning everything out of his desk and his office to make way for incoming editor-in-chief, Arnold Agnew. However, he left behind one small, navy-blue book, which he placed in the centre of the desk.

MacFarlane said, "I'll leave that for Arnold Agnew. He may need it."

Reid glanced at the book. "What is it?"

"The Book of Common Prayer," said MacFarlane.

Chapter 5

People smiled when John Bassett roared, "The Telegram is the best damn newspaper in Canada!"

John Bassett roaring again.

This roar had quite a bit of truth in it.

The Telegram *was* the most-quoted newspaper in Canada.

Telegram reporters and photographers had won dozens of awards for excellence and public service, including 21 National Newspaper Awards.

As the Telegram died, it was still winning awards. In April, 1971, the John A. MacLaren Award for graphic excellence and design, for the second consecutive year.

A comparison of today's Toronto Telegram and the old Pink Tely which preceded Bassett ownership would provide striking evidence of how much the paper had improved, both in physical appearance and in editorial content.

Editorially the old Pink Tely was fiercely patriotic, conservative and narrow-minded to the point of bigotry.

In those days people would have smiled if you had said the Tely would one day be running a column and regular series of articles on Toronto's various racial and religious groups.

They would have laughed aloud if you'd said the Tely would one day create, and elect, Toronto's first Jewish mayor, Nathan Phillips.

At a private dinner following the collapse of the Tely, John Bassett spoke quietly, but with some pride, of what the paper had done to improve the climate of racial and religious tolerance in the city.

The present editor-in-chief of the Telegram, Arnold Agnew says, "Many innovations of the Toronto Telegram are now reflected in the pages of the Toronto Star."

Tely staffers frequently argued that the Star would watch the introduction of a new idea at the Tely, then adopt the idea and, with their greater resources, improve upon it.

The Telegram revamped its Page Seven, to feature in-depth and background articles. This idea is reflected in the Star's daily and Saturday "Insight" departments.

The Telegram introduced Action Line to Toronto, where ombudsman Frank Drea and a large staff labored daily to straighten out the problems of the ordinary man. Several months later the Star produced their own version of Action Line.

The Telegram unquestionably had the largest collection of columnists, representing the most divergent points of view, of any paper in Canada. Even if columns were killed occasionally.

Coverage was steadily expanded in many areas. Weekend Magazine was added to the Saturday paper, later joined by Toronto Week, a television and entertainment guide. After Four was a popular section for the school crowd. Weekly sections on sports, business, food and travel filled out the paper.

There was some incompetence, mismanagement and deadwood, as in every group of human beings.

But, in the end, the Telegram's failure was not editorial. Every day, in preference to the Star, it was being bought by 242,612 people, being read by over half-a-million people. It was the third largest newspaper in Canada.

* * *

If the failure was not editorial, was it in other areas of management?

Some felt Bassett's tremendous enthusiasm for editorial matters caused him to neglect other areas of the paper. A staff joke was to twist the Tely slogan, "The Tely Cares" into "The Tely Cares—But Nobody Cares About The Tely."

It was meant in the sense that there was no strong General Manager co-ordinating the efforts of all departments and making them run efficiently.

Circulation and advertising were frequently criticised by insiders. A Tely employee spent months trying to get the paper delivered to his home on Saturdays. An ad agency president said he hadn't been visited by a Telegram salesman since he became president.

In the hectic days following the announcement, many were arguing that the Telegram was *not a failure at all*, despite a loss of a million dollars a year. On revenues of over \$25-million a year, it was pointed out, the loss was only about 4 per cent. It was felt this could be avoided by obvious economies.

Led by Robert Rupert, Canadian Representative of the Newspaper Guild, a frantic effort was launched to find a buyer who would keep the paper going.

The efforts had barely begun on the Monday following the closing announcement when John Bassett said the Tely was dead and that anyone who had hopes of him selling to a prospective publisher was dreaming.

The same day Star Publisher Beland Honderich announced that the Star had agreed to pay \$10-million for the Tely subscription lists and to lease the Tely presses for a two-year period.

This seemed to dash all hope of finding a purchaser for the paper. With the Star's \$10-million and the Tely plant, property and presses still to sell, John Bassett now seemed about to realize approximately \$20-million on disposal of the Tely. A prohibitive price for a new buyer to match.

Ron Haggart, active in the search for a buyer to keep the paper going, threw up his hands hopelessly.

"Obviously, now," he said, "the paper is worth more dead than alive."

However, on Tuesday, September 21st, Beland Honderich aroused new hopes. In a statement to Star employees, he said,

"We are still of the opinion The Telegram is no longer a viable, economic operation.

"But even at this late date, if anyone is prepared to come forward to try to arrange purchase of the newspaper and operate it as a going concern, our directors would be willing to withdraw from our agreement provided, of course, that Mr. Bassett would release us."

John Bassett thanked Honderich for the offer realizing "any good newspaperman would make this offer." He added, "But I continue to feel that to continue to give hope, when there is no hope, is cruel."

As the days rushed past, the efforts to find a saviour continued. John Bassett and Beland Honderich began setting deadlines, beyond which prospective buyers would have to pay an undisclosed penalty sum, to compensate the Star for expansion plans already underway. The sum would be established by Star auditors. The Star began interviewing and hiring some Tely editors, reporters and photographers.

One group interested in buying the Tely was headed by Laurie Kingsland, former vice-president of Southam Business Publications. The group failed to raise sufficient money within the deadline given.

Kingsland said the deadline had been a hell of a pressure play. "It seems obvious that Bassett has no intention of selling, if he can avoid it, to anybody but the Star."

Millionaire discount store owner, Honest Ed Mirvish, the man who had saved the Royal Alex Theatre and put it back on its feet, took the Telegram into consideration. A few days later, he bowed out saying he did not wish to make the necessary personal commitment to a new venture at his age. He was 57, the same age as John Bassett.

On Friday, October 1st, the rescue attempts reached a climax.

Robert Rupert, Guild representative, had been working night and day in the two weeks since Bassett wrote his closing notice. This sunny, Friday morning, in the 11th floor office of the Guild, he was sweating out yet another deadline. For three days now, he and John Bassett had been meeting with mining millionaire Stephen Roman, chairman of Denison Mines.

Rupert glanced at his watch, which said 11:55. The Bassett deadline had been extended to 12:00 noon, to allow Stephen Roman to improve his offer.

"Roman is with his directors right now," said Robert Rupert. "They're putting together a cinch-it offer." He paused. "God, we can't come this close and miss now."

The phone rang and the caller told Rupert that the new Stephen Roman offer was on its way to Bassett's office.

While Robert Rupert sweated out the fourth deadline

he'd gone through during the week, I questioned him about the Telegram's situation.

"It's a disgrace," said Rupert, "that the Telegram should die on the basis of a million dollar loss. On a business volume of close to \$30-million that loss is minuscule. About three or four per cent. Any businessman should be able to turn that around. If the Telegram can come that close to breaking even, in the extremely sick economy of the past three years, it can live. I've shown the financial statements of the Telegram to a firm of management consultants—and they confirm that opinion."

Rupert reviewed events since the Bassett announcement. "When we met, on the next Monday morning, I asked him point blank if it was important to him that the Tely live, if not under his leadership, then under someone else. He said yes, but he'd discussed a sale with the obvious possible buyers—that's Thomson and Southam—and none would take it on."

Looking at the telephone, and at his watch, Rupert said, "Where the survival of a 95-year-old institution is concerned, I don't think you should restrict your efforts to the obvious purchasers. This paper can be turned around."

The phone rang. This time it was a radio station asking for comment on the Roman offer. "It's being considered right at this minute," said Rupert. "I don't know what's keeping them apart. It would help matters if you emphasized they should be making every effort to settle any differences. There is nothing inflexible about the union position. Thanks."

I said to Rupert, "It is my understanding that John Bassett knew the Telegram was dead before the union vote."

"If that's the case," said Rupert, "he was bargaining in bad faith. He's said repeatedly, if he can't run the Telegram, nobody can run it. I don't accept that."

Rupert looked at his watch. It was now after 12:00 noon. To me, Rupert said, "Certainly Bassett didn't think there would be a strike. He told me that on the Monday morning following his announcement. That was not a strike vote, but a strike-authorization vote. To call a strike

at the Tely would have been absolutely suicidal. Lunacy."

At 12:12 the phone rang. Rupert listened, his face expressionless. He put down the phone and began struggling into his suit coat.

He said to me, "Bassett's turned down \$12-million. I'm going over to Roman's office."

In the office with us was Fred Jones, executive secretary of the Toronto Newspaper Guild. Jones spoke to Rupert.

"If it's true, are you going to blow the whistle?"

"I sure am," said Rupert. He was gone.

I sat in the office talking to Jones. A few minutes later a secretary poked her head in the door and said, "John Bassett was just on the line, asking for Rupert. I told him he'd left for Roman's office."

Freddy Jones picked up the phone and dialed John Bassett.

"Big John?" he said. "This is Little Freddy."

John Bassett's voice was audible in the room. Jones listened and made notes. Now and then, he got a word in.

"I see . . . didn't he come up with enough cabbage? . . . oh . . . he'd only pay on certain conditions . . . oh . . . well . . . couldn't there be an end run around that? . . . I see."

Jones put down the phone and called in a secretary to record his notes, which he read aloud to her.

"Roman's offer was conditional on a number of things. A Guild agreement to a 3-year wage freeze. A staff cut of 20 per cent. Employee participation in a stock-purchase plan. And something about the maintenance of relationships with advertisers. Bassett's position was he couldn't make agreements on behalf of other people. The biggest problem was the money. Eighty-four per cent of the money wouldn't have been payable until 1973. Bassett says he needs a big piece of the money right now."

That same afternoon, Friday, October 1st, Robert Rupert succeeded in bringing Bassett and Roman together in the Queen's Park Office of Premier William Davis, for a last-ditch try at agreement. The meeting was short and afterwards Rupert commented bitterly,

"I don't know how hard people can negotiate in half an

hour. That failure to agree was sure reached in a hell of a hurry."

One of Roman's many purchase conditions was assurance of a favorable ruling by the Department of National Revenue on the recent sale of Telegram investments, Bassett said. He added that his comment to Roman on the terms was: "No wonder you are a millionaire."

Roman's response to that is not known.

Bassett also revealed the Star had already paid \$5-million of the \$10-million price for the Tely subscription list. A short time earlier Beland Honderich had announced that the price included not only the Tely subscription lists, but "good will."

Premier Davis summed up the situation by saying that the plans to terminate the Telegram appeared to have gone "too far down the road" for anything to be done to save the paper. Mr. Bassett said he expected to conclude negotiations the following week with FP Publications, (with which The Globe and Mail is associated) for the sale of Tely assets, presumably the plant and presses. The Globe and Mail could assume ownership now and possession in two years, when the Star's lease expired.

In a letter to John Bassett, Star publisher Beland Honderich said the offer to release the Telegram from the sale agreement would be kept open until the Telegram suspended publication, providing any prospective purchaser would reimburse the Star for expenses they'd incurred, these expenses to be determined by Clarkson, Gordon & Company, chartered accountants.

Previously, Bassett had announced the Telegram would officially cease publication on Saturday, October 30th, 1971, now just four weeks away.

On the Thursday immediately preceding the end, John Bassett planned to make a tour of the plant, shaking hands with every employee. He customarily made the tour just before Christmas, flanked by his son, John F. Bassett and president D. S. Perigoe, to wish every employee a merry Christmas.

John Bassett felt the frantic last-minute attempts to save the Telegram were doomed and was exasperated by them. At one point he said,

"All I want now is to be left in peace to arrange the most decent burial with all the dignity and grace I can." All hope now seemed to be gone.

* * *

A group of Tely editorial people, led by Peter Worthington, began making their plans to wish John Bassett farewell. Tely Artist Andy Donato began a painting for presentation to the publisher.

Donato's first thought was a painting of the new Telegram building, but he felt this would look too cold and austere. He eventually made a collage of the new building, the previous building at Bay & Melinda and an earlier home of the Tely on King Street. On this background he superimposed a portrait of John Bassett.

Another early thought was to have the painting signed by exactly 111 employees, the number who had voted against the strike at the union meeting. But the number grew beyond this, as more and more asked to put their names on it. David Cobb, a former Tely man now at the Star, came in to sign it. And retired employees, such as Ken MacTaggart and Phyllis Griffiths. The number of signatures on the painting reached 138 by Tuesday, October 5th, the day of presentation.

At 11:30 that morning a group assembled in the newsroom and moved toward the publisher's office.

The scene was both awkward and moving. Worthington made a short speech, saying that no reply was required.

"We have all chipped together from our severance pay," he said to some laughter, "for this gift. Since we are not going to become centurions in a kind of Roman Empire . . . since Southams haven't got the guts to fight the Star . . . since Thomson has his title and doesn't need us . . . since Rupert joined the battle to save us a little bit too late . . . since we aren't radical enough to go to work for some movements . . . since we don't want the Conservative government and they don't want us . . . and since a lot of us are going to look back on our Tely years as a kind of journalistic Camelot . . . we'd like to give you this painting in memory of the Tely . . . a newspaper with no tomorrows."

John Bassett accepted the painting from Andy Donato. He looked at it a moment then moved slowly toward a director's chair which was standing nearby, a chair labelled in huge letters, "BIG JOHN."

He placed the painting on the chair so all could see.

His voice was very quiet, and almost under control.

"All I can say," he said, "is thank you very much."

He turned his back and stood there looking out the window. Those in the room shuffled a bit, looked at each other uncertainly, then gradually filed out.

There isn't much else to do when a man is crying.

Chapter 6

The Toronto Telegram died on Monday, September 13th, 1971, in the library of John David Eaton's home at 120 Dunvegan Road, Toronto.

There were 11 people present.

It was a pleasant room, facing south over the garden, a favorite room of Signe Eaton, John David's wife. It contained a few pieces of Gothic sculpture, some Gainsborough drawings, a fireplace and the walls were lined with books. The rug was Moroccan, in soft greens and whites.

Dominating the room, even when vacant, is the private desk of John David Eaton. It is Regency, light fruitwood in color and in mint condition. It looks out over the garden.

The eleven people began arriving at 5:00 p.m. Monday, Signe Eaton being the last to arrive. The others were John Bassett, his eldest son, John F. Bassett, 32, and his second son, Douglas Bassett, 31. John Bassett's third son, 29-year-old David Bassett, was not in attendance.

There were four sons of John David Eaton present. These were John Craig, Fred, Thor and George, ranging in age from 34 to 26, in that order.

By the happenstance of arrival, the Bassetts and the Eatons lined up on opposite sides of the room and someone made a joke about this arrangement.

Also present from the Telegram was J. J. "Joe" Garwood, vice-president, finance, The Telegram Publishing Co., Limited., there to furnish information on the paper's financial condition.

Apart from John Bassett, the three most important people there were Signe Eaton, Gordon Dorwar deSala-berry Wotherspoon, better known as "Swatty" Wotherspoon, and Alan Beattie.

These three people were trustees of a holding company, "Telegram Corporation Limited", which, among other interests, owned the "Telegram Publishing Co., Limited", which ran the newspaper.

Brigadier General "Swatty" Wotherspoon is a Colonel Commandant of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps. He left the Toronto law firm of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt to become the executive vice-president of "Eaton's of Canada, Ltd.", a holding company for Eaton interests. He is one of very few people ever brought into the Eaton organization at the director level and is regarded as a tax expert.

His own secretary, Pat Gallagher, who accompanied him to Eaton's, does not know the meaning of his nickname, "Swatty". She does know that her employer's brother, Stuart Wotherspoon, Q.C., of Ottawa, is also known as "Swatty." And her employer's eldest son, Richard Wotherspoon, 30, is also called "Swatty." She also understands her employer's father was known as "Swatty."

The third trustee, lawyer Allan Beattie, is with the law firm, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt, where "Swatty" used to be.

The "Telegram Corporation Limited" was formed by John David Eaton and John Bassett as a holding company for the 3 Bassett sons and the 4 Eaton sons. As the boys were then minors, three trustees were appointed. John Bassett's independent operation of the newspaper which was the "Telegram Publishing Co. Limited," was formalized with an employment contract.

At the union meeting which was to take place in three days there would be considerable soul-searching about the effect of a strike-authorization vote. Union members were apprehensive it might lead to the death of the Telegram.

One union member seized a floor microphone and said this was wrong. "There's only one man can kill the Tely!" he shouted. "And that man is John Bassett!"

In a sense, he was right. John Bassett was meeting the trustees to recommend the paper be killed.

John David Eaton and his wife Signe had been interested parties since John Bassett's first acquisition of the paper. The Eaton name had backed the bank loan necessary to buy and operate the paper. Within recent

years, the Eaton name had come "off the loan" according to published reports.

John David Eaton was not sitting at his desk this day. Unwell in recent years, he was on one of the Eaton islands in Georgian Bay. But he was still being kept informed of developments by phone.

Pacing back and forth in his usual impatient manner, John Bassett outlined the paper's financial condition. It had not shown a profit since 1968. In about 2 years it had lost about \$2-million dollars. A further million dollar loss was estimated for 1971. The economy had suffered a down-turn and advertising revenue was dropping. Union negotiations had reached an impasse. There was a worldwide trend toward the disappearance of competing afternoon newspapers. They now existed in only 7 cities in North America.

Bassett mentioned the existence of this offer of \$10-million from the Toronto Star. This would enable the paper to pay off the bank loan and to pay severance benefits due employees. While the paper might continue for a few more years, he was convinced it was not indefinitely viable.

At some later date the Star offer might not be repeated. He was hopeful of selling other assets to the Globe and Mail. Now was the time when the paper could be folded honorably, meeting obligations to the banks, the employees and the shareholders.

There was a general discussion of the implications of the sale, including public reaction and the possible effect on the current provincial election.

In the end, there was only one dissenting voice.

It belonged to John F. Bassett, John Bassett's eldest son, the man who had been for years heir-apparent to the role of publisher.

"I understand the offer," he said. "I understand the reasons for accepting it—and I am still against it."

After further discussion the meeting was adjourned to the following morning. Feeling that the presence of John Bassett Senior might be inhibiting, anyone interested in pursuing the subject was invited to meet with the trustees the following morning.

On the morning of the 14th, John F. Bassett, along with Fred Eaton, met with the trustees again. Three times during the discussion, phone calls were made to Joe Garfield at the paper for financial information.

In the end, John F. Bassett lost his case.

The next day Bassett's meeting with union officials closed with the ominous words,

"You'll have to take whatever steps you feel are necessary, and so will I."

Thursday there was the charade of the union vote.

Friday, at midnight, came the stunning publisher's statement.

It can be argued that the Telegram began to die with the business turn-down in 1969. Rightly or wrongly, the economics of business tend toward one-newspaper cities. Forecasts indicated higher costs and lower revenues.

The union argument that the paper did not need to die will persist for a long time. As will the argument that the unions themselves killed the paper. Regardless of responsibility, the loss of one more newspaper voice is a tragedy.

* * *

A newspaper made up of 1,350 human beings takes a long time to die. The Telegram was still to publish for several weeks. In that time I talked to Don Poitras, personnel manager at the paper, and the man who had been management negotiator with the unions.

Many of the principals in the events surrounding the end of the paper had long newspaper backgrounds. Bassett began as a reporter. Honderich not only began as a reporter, but at one time was president of the Toronto Newspaper Guild.

Donald Arthur Poitras, 47, married with 2 children, is the third generation in his family to have worked on the Montreal Star. He has 10 relatives in the newspaper business. He moved to the Toronto Star in 1948 as a pressman. He was president of the Pressmen's Union for 11 years and chairman of a bargaining group of pressmen, stereotypers, mailers and typographers.

After 16 years at the Toronto Star, he moved to The Tely, and to the other side of the bargaining table as personnel manager, in charge of Labor Relations.

"Sometimes," he said, "I think it's a miracle the Tely has survived as long as it has. With revenues of approximately \$30-million, we've been fighting a paper with revenues of \$48-million. Per 1000 papers our manpower costs have been greater, perhaps a reflection on management."

Poitras, with his labor and management backgrounds, is perhaps able to assess responsibility for the paper's death as well as anybody.

"Whose fault is it? I see it as a five-part thing. Three of those parts can be put down to business conditions, worldwide, national and local business conditions. But management has to take a share of the blame. And so do the unions."

Poitras saw the Tely's competitive position weakening several years ago when the Star replaced the Star Weekly, with the supplement, The Canadian Magazine. "That saved them \$1-million a year," he said. "Another million to fight us with. There have been other signs of sharpening competition. Last fall, the Star granted mail room and shipping room wage increases which we considered excessive, hard to meet. When we protested, the Star said, 'That's the way it is.'"

Poitras believes the unions mis-read the Telegram situation from the beginning. His months of negotiations have been conducted against a background of press production problems in which deliberate sabotage was suspected.

"It's an old union tactic," he said, "to force management to bargain more realistically. We were trying to bargain realistically."

Five pressmen were fired for negligence. Arbitration of the dismissals is pending, a situation now somewhat academic.

At the beginning of union negotiations in December, 1970, according to Poitras, John Bassett made known his willingness to grant a \$10. a week increase in key-positions. He was asked by the union negotiators not to table this offer, until they had bargained to a conclusion with the Star. At the Star, the unions won \$40. a week increases for 1972, over 1970 earnings.

"They then asked us for parity," said Poitras. "Loud

and clear. The publisher rejected this totally and opened the books. Union auditors confirmed the loss position. In mid-July we were working furiously to prepare a new approach, based on the 4-day week. The response inside the company was terrific. It was a major, genuine effort on our part to come to realistic terms—we would have been the first newspaper in North America to introduce it."

Poitras talked enthusiastically about aspects of the plan. "However," he said, "the unions rejected it without proper study and without consulting the memberships. I don't pretend that it wouldn't have needed a lot of negotiating. But it was the last chance for all of us to grab the brass ring. We missed it."

"The next union proposal," said Poitras, "was the I.O.U. proposal—a wage freeze for 1971—but linked to a \$36. a week increase for January 1st, 1972." Poitras told them, "If you really mean this you have to be the craziest bastards ever to come down the pike. If we can't afford ten dollars in 1971 how can we afford thirty-six dollars in 1972?"

By now, the negotiations had become academic.

Don Poitras was still upset. He did not entertain a high regard for some of the union representatives, Bob Rupert, Freddy Jones, Marc Zwelling, although he was an old union man.

He considered young Marc Zwelling an intensely doctrinaire activist, a man who looked on management as unenlightened. When John Bassett returned from a European holiday in July he found labor reporter Marc Zwelling had been elected chairman of the Toronto Newspaper Guild and he removed him from the labor beat.

"It was one of those things," said Poitras. "Properly approached, he might well have reconsidered."

But the union saw it as a retaliatory action and circulated a petition which was delivered to Bassett. His response was that he was "not prepared to accept management by petition."

* * *

Speaking of the 4-day week, Poitras kept saying, "We had one chance at the brass ring. And we all missed it."

People got ready for the end. Reuben Slonim wrote his story for the final edition, a moving piece, almost a eulogy on what would survive. Ron Haggart had been preparing, in his mind, for a summing-up, but that opportunity was to be denied him.

Unbeknownst to him, the word came down that no more letters from readers, bemoaning the death of the paper, were to be used in the paper. From time to time Haggart had always filled in with a column, The Readers Write, a collection of letters addressed to him.

On Tuesday, October 5th, he turned in such a column which was run on October 7th. In one of the letters from readers was the sentence, "In this age of progress and enlightenment, how can somebody named Bassett railroad The Telegram into oblivion for a wad of money he doesn't even need?"

On Friday, Haggart was told by managing editor Doug Creighton that the Telegram would not be using the Haggart column henceforth to the cessation of publication.

"Am I fired?" said Haggart.

Not so far as Creighton knew.

"Am I assigned to other duties?"

"No."

"What's the reason?"

"All I'm doing is passing on instructions from the publisher," said Creighton. "I'll try to find out what it's about."

Columnist McKenzie Porter had his first three columns killed, after the September 18th announcement. Ken, who was late in hearing about the Saturday announcement, because he disdained radio and television, blamed the closure on half-baked, hippie reporters, with half-baked socialist ideas.

"My mind boggles," he wrote, "at the idea of working newspapermen putting their union in the hands of these semi-literate scribes, many of them aliens, or draft-dodgers."

After his columns were killed, on the grounds that it was not a time for recriminations, Ken Porter quit.

Ken remained in character to the end. Standing at the

bar in the Spadina Hotel, Tely watering hole, he de-
claimed, "I refuse to work for companies which do not
make money."

Gallows humor flourished on the bulletin board. One
usually reliable source reported that the Spadina Hotel
was considering buying the paper, as without the Tely
employees it would go out of business.

Columnist Paul Rimstead, perennial pauper and pool
shark, announced in his column that he was selling up all
his possessions and taking off for a beach shack in Cali-
fornia to, finally, write that great novel.

Rimstead was a talented writer, a man with a great
zest for the here and now. Andy Donato, Tely artist, also
enjoyed life fully, but in his paintings he looked back-
ward to old Model-T cars, deserted railroad stations and
Rogers batteryless radios. He'd just opened 2 new show-
ings of his fine art, one in Hamilton and one in Toronto.
He planned to make a try at full-time painting as a way
of life.

Goodby and good luck, Ken, Ron, Andy, Paul, the John
Bassetts, Doug, that blonde who used to stop the news-
room dead, the other Andy, Arnold, that guy just hang-
ing on, that loyal secretary, that man in the uniform, that
girl with the bad back, that incredibly dumb brunette,
that cynic, that bore, that fool, that accountant who
wanted a receipt for the coffee, and to Helen, Wilson,
Phyllis, Herb, Laurie, Fitz, J.D.M., A.W.J.B., that recep-
tionist who did crossword puzzles, Hal, Art, Bob, the
other Bob, John Maclean, Ralph Allen, Ken McTaggart,
Ted McCall, that nice guy who emptied the wastebaskets,
that wise old man, gay old girl, that librarian, the kind
ones, that new kid in advertising, that old friend in promo-
tion, that dumb, fucking editor, that guy carrying on with
one arm, that girl with the walk, that tattooed guy on the
trucks, that bright delivery boy who never had any
change, and the rest of you.

Chapter 7

All Camelots, even journalistic Camelots, ring down the
curtain to the cry of a new-born babe from the wings.

While one group of Tely employees was working to
save the old paper, another group was working just as
hard to bring another newspaper into being, this one a
morning tabloid, the Toronto Sun.

Meanwhile the Telegram had to be published every day
and there were still farewells to be made. In Telegram
tradition departing employees received a simple pewter
mug. John Bassett received his at a private dinner at the
Walker House.

Again, there were 11 people present. Arnold Agnew,
Doug Creighton, Andy Donato, Joe Garwood, George
Gross, Fraser Kelly, Bob Pennington, D. S. Perigoe, Don
Poitras, Peter Worthington, and John Bassett.

Bassett's mug was inscribed, "To John Bassett, who was
The Telegram and who gave us the best 19 years. From
the Tely staff who also cared."

There was none of the strident John Bassett visible as
he made what he said would be his first, last and only
speech on the death of the paper.

"History will remember the Telegram as a great news-
paper," he said. "My understanding of freedom of the
press has not been simply freedom for the publisher to
express himself, but freedom for the reader to hear many
points of view."

He dwelt on the contribution the paper had made to
racial and religious tolerance in the city.

Later he said he was over the acute pain of losing the
paper. Nor was he now worried about the employees as
he felt sure they would find other places. He did feel
strongly still that it was a loss of another voice in the
community and in Canada.

"I guess when I look back, they were good years. And
I hope they really will be remembered as a Camelot."

* * *

Back at the Telegram one of the 1,350 employees receiving notice was vice-president John F. Bassett, known around the paper as "Johnny F." In the past few years most of his time had been taken up with stage, movie and television production. With Ed Mirvish, he brought "Hair" to the Royal Alex where it ran longer than anything in the history of Canadian Theatre and made a million dollars.

In the past few years Johnny F. has appeared in the office with his own hair almost down to his shoulders and with a long, drooping moustache.

"When I'm raising money from businessmen," he says, "I trim it short. After I get the money, I let it go again."

Johnny F. is a hard-eyed young man, with his father's good looks. With his two younger brothers he was raised in a highly-competitive home. As youngsters they played hockey in the basement with their father, whacking him across the legs when frustrated by his size and tactics, until he stamped off upstairs. The four Bassett males had their own table-tennis house league, with standings pasted on the wall.

John Bassett is possibly the only man to have won Ontario Father-and-Son Tennis Championships with two different sons.

At times John Bassett's drive and impatience became too much. One year at North Hatley Johnny F. and his father were paired in the finals of the club tennis championship. The match was scheduled for the following day, but the older Bassett discovered an empty court a day ahead of time, conned the opposition into playing a day early and went looking for Johnny F.

"He found me on the 14th hole of the golf course," says Johnny F. "He yanked me into his car, rushed me to the tennis club, despite my protests. I played badly and we lost the tournament. Then he gave me shit all the way home, because we'd lost. I finally hauled off and punched him. There wasn't much damage because most of the steam had evaporated from my punch by the time it got all the way up to his chin."

John Bassett's competitiveness and love of sport took hold in his eldest son. At Upper Canada Johnny F. was

the youngest hockey goal-keeper in the team's history. At Western University he continued to play hockey and took up squash. Before a knee injury forced him to give up the game a few years ago he was Ontario Squash Champion for 3 years running. At Western he took his B.A. in English and History and was gold medallist in his graduating year.

The gold medal surprised some of his friends. "No one thought I did any work," he says. "I had my studies organized so I was always free at night."

He went to work for the Victoria Times as a reporter and asked for extra work. He made a deal with the paper. "You buy me a camera and I'll give you my pictures free."

That camera, a Yashica D Reflex now sits behind him in his vice-president's office at the Telegram. His rise at the Tely was inevitable, but on his way up he'd done everything at the Telegram,—except write editorials.

His introduction to newspaper ways began when he reported to the Sports Department for summer work, while still a student. At six a.m. in the morning, still groggy, he was introduced to the legendary sportsman and columnist, Ted Reeve. The Moaner, the man who could write, fight or hold the light.

Reeve offered Johnny F. a cardboard cup. "Here, son, have a spot of tea."

Johnny F. gulped half of it down, then staggered back, gasping and choking. Reeve's tea was pure rum.

"Welcome to the Tely," said Reeve.

Today Johnny F., 32, but looking older, lives in a large house on Toronto's exclusive Bridlepath, opposite the home of architect John C. Parkin. There is a covered swimming pool in the rear and gardeners at work on the grounds.

He is married to slim, attractive Susan Carling, of the brewing family. They have 4 children, John, 10, Vicki, 9, Carling (a girl) 4, and Heather, 2, and a cat with many kittens.

For the past several months Johnny F. had been busy producing a hockey movie called "Face-Off", a modern love story on skates. It would be premiered in 21 cities across Canada.

It was only in the past few years that Johnny F. had veered away from the newspaper toward film work.

I asked him why.

"I am like my father in many respects," he said. "If I'm doing something, I like to be doing it. Calling my own shots as much as possible. I wouldn't want to be publisher—and have my father dictating the editorials."

Why had the Telegram died?

"The economic facts of life. It's just not in the cards for three first-class papers to publish here, in a situation of dwindling advertising."

Why had he opposed closing the paper?

"It was partly emotional, I think. I was hard put to give good reasons for continuing. I guess what I was really saying was that I wanted my chance to make it go. But the others were against me, even my own brother. I think Mrs. Eaton was sad about it, but didn't want to diminish the shareholders' interest. My father had very good business reasons for his decision. It was for the good of everyone. He'd been looking for solutions and when the Star offer appeared. . . ."

Johnny F. threw up his hands. "It was like Moses leading us out of the wilderness."

Johnny F. had the reputation of being harder on people than his father. I questioned him on this.

He became angry. "You're goddam right I would have been tougher on people here! And if I'd been running things, we'd be in business today! There would have been more money for the good people—and the others would be gone."

"Was the union strike vote a deciding factor?"

"No, the decision had been made before then. It may have made the decision less agonizing for my father."

"Wouldn't you have saved a lot of money in termination benefits if you'd allowed the union to go ahead and strike?"

Johnny F. laughed. "We'd have gotten out with a piss-pot full—saved several million dollars. But that was a conscious decision. You don't operate that way. I not only have to live in this town, I *want* to live in it."

I was interviewing Johnny F. in his office at the Tele-

gram. It was Friday, September 24th, one week after the closing announcement. That day, like everyone else, he had received an envelope containing his official notice.

He looked at the letter. "It's a son of a bitch, you know I still can't believe it . . . life without the Telegram."

He looked around his office, lined with trophies and photographs of family and friends. His Yashica D Reflex camera sat on a table behind him.

I asked him a final question.

"Why wouldn't your father turn the paper over to you?"

"He wasn't going to make me publisher at the age of 32," said Johnny F. "Even though he himself was a publisher at that age."

PART II

OTHER NEWSPAPER STORIES

Chapter 1

THE DEATH OF A DOG

Dateline: Korea 1951

Three days have passed since the nine members of our family, including Mero, escaped to this small village from Chongju on the ninth day of July, 1950. Today is the 12th day of July.

All last night the sky over Chongju was as bright as though the sun were rising in the night. From this we knew that Chongju was being bombed by U.N. planes, and we imagined the whole city had been destroyed.

At this small mountain village of Tun-kol we were able to rent a very small room in which Mother and the small children slept. My father, my younger brother and I slept on the *mong sok*, or straw mat, on the ground.

Mero, my dog, who always sticks to my side, was sleeping with her chin resting on my throat when I woke up.

"Hey, Merol Get up off there!" I said.

Mero jumped up quickly.

"Did you sleep well?" I asked Mero and took hold of her by the ears and shook her gently. She is a beautiful purebred German shepherd dog, colored dark brown and yellow.

Mero became a member of our family early one summer when the barley heads were beginning to grow in the blue-green valley fields and the cherry trees were blossoming vigorously along the Musim River banks. I remember well because I was in fourth year high school and used to go to school through the tunnel of overhanging cherry trees along the river.

One day when I came home from school I found a puppy dog eating her supper on the porch.

"Hello, a dog!" I said.

I threw down my book bag and caught up the little dog. Around her neck I found a card which said:

"A birthday present from Uncle."

Before Mero came, I used to play a lot at school after hours, but from the very next day on I found I could hardly wait to hurry home and see little Mero. All the

members of our family loved Mero, but my father and I loved her more than anybody else. When she was four months old we decided to send her to the dog training school, which was very expensive, costing 9,000 *won*.

Happily, Mero's training hour was set for 5 o'clock in the afternoon and as soon as school was over I would fly to the river bank to watch the training.

For the first month Mero learned only to follow the trainer obediently. The second month she learned to jump over boxes and go into the water to bring back sticks thrown by the trainer.

Later in her training she also learned to jump through a hoop of fire at command and to remain inside a ring protecting a bundle of valuables against anyone who came near. She was also taught to disarm a man who pretended to attack the trainer with a stick.

When the trainer finally brought back Mero from the school he said, "I have trained a thousand dogs but I have never seen a dog as intelligent as this one."

He asked us to sell Mero to him for 30,000 *won*, but of course we refused his offer.

Because I had to go to school every day, Mero would go to the fire station with my father to stay with him during the day. Every morning, when Father had finished reading his newspaper, he would fold it and ask Mero to take it home to my mother.

Mero would take it home without disturbing the paper one little bit and also without getting a single drop of spit on it. When she arrived home she would rest her chin on the porch, or *maru*, and cry to let Mother know she had brought the paper.

She also had a habit of never sitting on the ground without something under her. When she wanted to sit she would collect many pairs of shoes, which we left at the door of our house, and make a nest to sit or lie on. When we visited the homes of other people this would cause a great deal of laughter and confusion because Mero would mix up all the pairs of shoes that had been left standing at the door. No one minded the confusion, though, because everyone laughed at her trick.

Mero was also completely trained about her food, a

thing which was said to be almost impossible for other dogs to learn. She would eat only food given to her by my mother and father and by myself. She would not begin to eat until we gave the order.

When we finally said the magic word, "*Mogo!*" she would jump to her dish and begin eating, waving her big tail for joy.

It was this wonderful obedience of Mero's which was to be the main fact of her life and death.

* * *

The village of Tun-kol where our family had taken refuge was high in the mountains. On this morning, Mero and I ran up the narrow path between the old cryptomeria and pine trees, kicking at the wet grass.

When we got to the mountain top the sky was red and pink but the sun had not yet risen. I could look down and see the tree-lined highway leading back toward Chongju between the wide fields. Other mountains were gray in the distance and at their feet I could see the tops of a few farmers' houses through the foggy mist. Last night's roaring of the guns was gone, and as I looked at the peaceful sight spread in front of my eyes I felt that the war was an old story which I had heard a long time ago, or that the roaring of the guns had been only the thunder of a rainy night. It did not seem possible a war was going on only ten *li* away.

Mero jumped at me as though asking me to play as we used to play in the days when we lived in peace.

"But, Mero," I said, "I have a big trouble. What shall I do? Because I have no food to give you."

For two days now Mero had eaten almost nothing. She still looked playful, but I was surprised and frightened to see how her stomach had shrunk.

Yesterday and the day before I had gone with my younger brother, Jong Hyong, to the village to collect scraps of garbage to feed Mero. I did not know what we would do today, because last evening when we went to houses begging for garbage, people complained.

They said, "Did you ever see a man who brings his dog as a refugee? Did you ever see a man who begs food for a dog?"

One woman refugee from Seoul spoke angrily to us, "Listen, young fellows, in Seoul I had a dog which was worth 7,000 *won*. I had to leave my dog behind, so I think you had better give your dog away also. In this kind of world there is not even enough food for human beings, so how can you find food for dogs?"

When he was spoken to this way, Jong Hyong became angry too. "Did anybody tell you to leave your dog behind?" he asked the woman. "No. You did not bring your dog because you were not able to. We were able to bring Mero with us, so we brought her."

We went to the house of an old man who was said to be the richest man in the village.

"Are you in peace, grandfather?"

"Hmm," said the old man, stroking his silvery white beard. "Again you come for dog food. I want you to understand that I am also a man who loves dogs very much. But with the war the world has changed a great deal in a very short time. Only last week I had to kill my own dog?"

"What?" Jong Hyong cried. "You killed your own dog?"

"Yes," said the old man, "what else could I do?"

He took his long Korean pipe, the *tambetay*, from his belt and began to fill it with tobacco.

Jong Hyong stared. "Why," he said finally, "you could have fed your dog scraps of garbage, like we are doing."

"No," the old man said, "we must feed the garbage to the pigs. If we do this, then later we can eat the pigs. Can you eat a dog?"

"Where is the man," said Jong Hyong scornfully, "who would raise a dog to eat? There is no such man. People keep a dog so they can play together."

The old man laughed. "Please don't tell such an old story. Didn't you hear the guns last night? People are starving for food. How can they keep a dog to play with? No, it is an old story. The time to keep a dog has now gone away. I am sorry to have to say this to you, but I had planned to kill your dog today."

"*Muosi otchigo, otcheiaio!*" cried Jong Hyong. "What is how and what?"

He was so startled he forgot to be polite to the old man,

and used this slang expression, which was bad. Besides, the old man's words had frightened him.

"Listen, grandfather!" Jong Hyong said. "If you don't want to give us any garbage for Mero, just say you don't want to give us any. What did you say? You were going to kill Mero? All right, go ahead and try! I would like to see you do that!"

Jong Hyong spoke with such rudeness because he was very young and because he was very nearly crying.

Jong Hyong and I left Mero at the room we were renting, playing with our baby sister while we tried to think of some other way of getting food.

"I know!" I shouted. "Frogs! Let's catch frogs for Mero!"

"Of course!" said Jong Hyong. "Then we will cook them and give them to her."

That afternoon we went down to the rice paddies to catch frogs. We caught about 20 frogs and that evening we roasted them and gave them to Mero. We were glad to be able to feed Mero, but by the time the frogs were roasted they were very small.

* * *

Now as I played with Mero on the top of the mountain in the early morning, I wondered again what we could do today to get food for her.

"Mero!" I said. "You must eat what you can find! You don't have to wait for our command to eat any more!"

Mero jumped at me as if she understood, but I knew she did not. When I came down from the mountain that morning I made up my mind to give my breakfast to Mero. So when I received the little ball of cooked rice which was our breakfast, I wrapped it in a piece of paper and went into the woods with her so no one would know I was giving my food to the dog.

When I placed the rice in front of Mero I could see she was terribly hungry, but she just looked from the food to me and back again. She was waiting to command to eat.

"*Mogo,*" I said. The rice vanished in the short moment it takes to blink an eye.

The little ball of rice could never fill Mero's empty stomach, but I felt happier because I had given her my

breakfast. I had to do it away from the eyes of other people because they would say I was crazy, feeding a dog when there was not enough food for human beings. In my heart I could not blame them for feeling this way.

To this little village of 20 houses more than 500 refugees had come in the last three days. All, including our family, were short of food, and we were eating only two small meals a day.

Now I would not eat until supper. I felt very hungry, because I had had no experience in eating only one meal a day. I could not tell anyone I was hungry, so I drank lots of water and went to the mountains to pick wild berries to fill my stomach.

"Mero," I said, "I am hungry today just as you are."

When the sun went down that evening the old man of the village came to our house. With him were two young men.

"I am sorry to say this," said the old man, "but we have come to kill the dog. It is not only my idea, but also everyone else's."

My eyes opened wide. "Listen, grandfather!" I cried. "You are really going to kill my dog? Mero is a member of our family, so what you are saying is you are going to kill one of my family! This is not an ordinary dog! She is like a person! She is my friend, my playmate."

"Listen, young student," said the old man. "Even if you say the dog is a member of your family, a dog is still a dog. Also we have noticed she does not find food for herself like other dogs. She has not eaten for three days. Soon she will go crazy and begin to bite people in our village. Then what are you going to do about that?"

The old man pointed at Mero with his stick. Mero jumped up quickly and growled.

"Look at that!" the old man shouted. "I did not even touch her, but she growled as if to bite me!"

He turned to me. "Young student, if you don't want us to kill the dog you had better leave this village with her before she attacks someone!"

"Grandfather," I said, "she growled because you pointed at her and spoke with a loud voice. She was frightened.

Mero would not attack anyone unless she was commanded to do so."

"She *will* attack someone!" the old man said. "When dogs starve they go mad and bite!" He became still more angry. "I do not understand how you can keep a dog in this world when we do not have enough food for human beings!"

My mother spoke: "Jong Yong," she said, "it is the same thing whether we let Mero die from hunger or whether we let her be killed."

"Mother!" I said. "How can you talk like that? If the people in the village do not like Mero and try to kill her, then I will leave the village!"

The old man laughed harshly. "And where will you go?" he asked. "It does not matter where you go now, there is not enough food even for man."

"*Noin*," said my mother, addressing the old man, "I am a woman who has many children, and even to a dog I do not like to do cruel things. But the world has changed. You may kill the dog."

Even as she spoke I could see tears in my mother's eyes.

"Don't just say, 'Go ahead and kill the dog,'" the old man said. "If you really mean to let us kill the dog you must arrange it for us."

"What do you mean 'arrange'?" I said loudly. "Do you want me to kill my own dog?"

"No," he said. "We will kill the dog. But we must ask you to tie her or hold her. If we attack when she is free she is very likely to kill one of us."

I could find no words to say.

He spoke again. "Listen, young student, your mother says to let us kill the dog before she becomes mad. So let us take the dog up the mountain. We will kill the dog. You do not have to worry."

Mero came and stood beside me, watching the old man and the two younger men with the sticks in their hands.

"Mero," I said, stroking her head. Mero waved her tail.

"We had better hurry," the old man said. "We are busy men. We cannot stay here all day long."

I gave Mero a little piece of *dduck*, rice bread, which

I put on the ground in front of her. In spite of her great hunger, she awaited the command.

"Mogo, Mero," I said.

She ate the tiny piece of *dduck*.

I could not help the tears falling from my eyes. "It is probably the last meal you can have in this world, Mero," I said. My grief was terrible to make the decision to kill my friend Mero, who had played with me every day for three years.

"*Noin!*" I cried to the old man. "Are you a man of tears and blood? If so, you cannot ask me to kill my friend."

"I know it is a very sad thing for you," he said. "I do not like to do this. But I am only trying to do what is for the good of everyone."

I called Mero and began slowly walking up the mountain which we had climbed every morning for the last three days. Already the insects had begun their song of night, and over the western mountains there was a cloud dyed red by the evening glow.

I walked slowly, because as soon as we reached the top of the mountain Mero would be killed by the men who followed us with big sticks in their hands.

"Mero," I said, "why weren't you born the dog of a rich and powerful master? If so, you might have gone for refuge to some safer place than this and played with your master as before."

My legs would not walk any more. "Now," I said, "you must be killed today, because you had a weak and poor master like me."

I sat down beside the narrow path and stroked Mero's head, and I wept. Mero waited, wagging her big tail from side to side. She licked my cheek with her tongue, as if to ask, "What is wrong with you?"

I could not stop weeping. "Merol My friend Merol!"

"Come on now," said the old man. "Let us go up."

I did not move.

"Make your mind strong," he said, "and just go up."

And so we reached the top of the mountain.

Ordering Mero to sit down, I cut a few branches from the trees, and with the branches I made a small square around her. Then I took a stone and tied my handkerchief

around it to make a bundle. I threw the bundle inside the square and gave Mero the command to stand guard over it.

Then I ran down the mountain path like a bird. I could not stay to see Mero killed by the young men.

I knew that Mero would never leave the bundle. I knew also she would not let anyone step inside the square I had made around her. But I had made the square very small so that the men could hit Mero's head with their big sticks without stepping inside the square.

When I ran down the path Mero did not even try to move from the position in which I had commanded her to stay. How would Mero cry out to me at the moment in which she was dying? Would she accuse me of letting her be killed, she who had been my best friend for three years, for all of her life?

That evening all the members of my family showed tears, and all prayed that Mero's soul would go to a peaceful place.

"I will never keep a dog again as long as I live," said my mother, wiping her eyes.

Go in peace, friend Mero.

Chapter 2

A TYPICAL CITY EDITOR

Dateline: Toronto 1947

Cardiff, who is on the back desk at the Record these days, is a typical city editor. City editors are hard-boiled and cynical on the surface, but when they think no one is looking they are furtively wiping away tears, or blowing their noses, hard.

Cardiff sends me to take photographs of some woman whose house has just burned down, with her kids in it.

Cardiff says, "Get her staring at the smoking ruins. Wringing her hands."

Or, "Mrs. Blatz has just been killed with an axe by Mr. Blatz."

And Cardiff wants a picture of the axe, being examined by the little Blatzes.

Today Cardiff says, "Flight-Lieutenant Ernest Johnson, local boy flying out of India during the war, has been found alive and ferried out of Tibet. Lost Valley stuff. Went missing four years ago and was listed dead. Today he arrives in town."

I hold up my hand. "Let me guess. His wife has married another. She is now in hospital with hysterics."

"At the General," says Cardiff. "Get a picture when they first meet—at her hospital bedside."

I muse, in hushed tones, "A Modern Enoch Arden! . . . I've Always Loved *You*, Ernest . . ."

But Cardiff isn't listening, so I go away and get Murphy, who hopes some day to be a dialogue writer on *Sister Carrie*, and we go to the General Hospital.

Murphy and I sit down in the waiting room to wait for this Johnson. About five cigarettes later we see this RCAF uniform talking to the girl at the desk. She lifts the phone and after a while Dr. McCarthy comes out of the elevator and goes up to this chap.

We are at his elbow when he says, "You can see her at once."

This boy looks like no advertisement for Tibet, as he

has bags under his eyes and is very haggard. By looking close, you can see he is only about 25.

He doesn't seem to hear Dr. McCarthy, but just blurts out, "Is she better? Is she still unconscious?"

They don't pay any attention to us, which is a break.

We all get into the long hospital elevator while Dr. McCarthy is telling him, "Your wife is as well as can be expected. However, you should know that the discovery of having two husbands, er, the fact that she married again—has made her the victim of severe psychic shock. She may not recognize you."

Dr. McCarthy continues in a sympathetic voice. "I mean, I hope you won't display any bitterness about this second marriage of hers. No recriminations. Anything unkind might precipitate a relapse. You understand?"

The perspiration is standing out on this boy's forehead, above the red line his hat has left, and he looks good for a relapse himself, but he nods.

The elevator stops at five. She is in a semiprivate with screens across the foot of the bed. We hang back a little, while the doctor and our man walk up and around the bed. She has been very beautiful, but right now her face is about the color of the pillow her black hair is splashed against. She's looking at the ceiling, but not as though she sees anything there.

It takes a long time for her to notice the doctor. Then she looks at him blankly.

"Mrs. Johnson," says Dr. McCarthy, "your husband is here."

Her face begins to crumple up like her mind is pulling strings. It's a picture that would have made the wire service, but I don't take it. Sometimes my heart isn't in my work.

"Ernie," she says, "Ernie. You came back." We can hardly hear her. A tear runs down her cheek and she turns her face away on the pillow.

Her husband sits down on the bed and takes her hand. She reaches up and draws his head down beside hers, as though she doesn't want to look at him.

The back-lighting is good so I snap a picture, just using

one flash to fill in and pick up the wings and the ribbons on his chest. They don't even blink.

"I didn't want to do it," she is saying. "Honest, Ernie. I've never forgotten. I kept hoping you were alive. But they said you were dead. I waited three years. Ernie, I love you. You believe me, don't you, Ernie?"

She is rambling on, stroking his head. "I never really loved him. But there was little Ernie, growing up with no father. When I was working, I had to leave him in a nursery. I didn't marry for love, honest, Ernie. I just married him so our boy would have a home, that's all. I don't love him, Ernie. Forgive me. I'll die, darling . . ."

Her voice rises, "A telegram? A telegram for me? Thank you very much. Oh, Ernie's alive. *Ernie* . . ."

Dr. McCarthy taps her husband on the shoulder. "She's slightly delirious again. She'll be all right now. But you'd better leave."

So the boy disengages her arms and puts them down slowly on the bed spread. He stands looking at her a minute as she drifts off to sleep, a smile touching her lips.

To be safe, I get another shot, with Murphy holding the flash extension.

As the boy walks stiffly out of the room, Murphy gets up to his elbow and asks him, "Will you be living in town, Mr. Johnson? When your wife gets out?"

He doesn't answer Murphy. Murphy tries again in the elevator. "When Mrs. Johnson is better, will you live in town? A plug in the story might make it easier to find a house."

He looks at Murphy and says tonelessly, "You'd better ask Mr. Johnson when he arrives."

"Mr. Johnson?" Murphy gets red.

"Yes," says the boy, "I'm the second husband."

The rest of the way, Murphy and I are silent. It seems a long ride.

Chapter 3

A TYPICAL STRIPPER

Dateline: Toronto 1970

I missed Allen Funt's movie, What Do You Say To A Naked Lady? So yesterday I did the next best thing. I went over to the Victory Burlesque and talked to one named Patti Wayne.

As the star of the show she ends up stark naked on the runway. I caught her show and then I caught her as soon as she got off the stage.

She was born Patricia Taubman and her uncle is Howard Taubman, a music and drama critic of the New York Times. Miss Wayne is a real kewpie doll with huge, blue eyes.

I looked deep into them and said, "Funny, you don't look Jewish."

Miss Wayne laughed. "Not only that, but I was born on Christmas Day. When I show my birth certificate people say, 'How come all you damn Jews are born on Christmas Day?'"

"What year?" I asked.

Miss Wayne said, "I'm old enough to know better and young enough to learn."

There was a beauty mark under her left eye. "Is that real?" I asked.

"No," said Miss Wayne.

Earlier, when Miss Wayne had bent over on stage, I had noticed another beauty mark. I said, "What about that other beauty mark. The one on your—on your—"

"On my butt?" said Miss Wayne. "That's not a beauty mark. It's a bruise. I think my boy friend did it."

After a while, I managed to think of another question. "Are you cold?"

"My feet are still half-frozen," she said. "From Buffalo."

"Oh," I said. "What theatre was that?"

"I didn't freeze them in the theatre," she said. "I got caught in that big snowstorm on the Lackawanna Freeway. My Cadillac went into the ditch and the motor

stopped. I was stuck in a snowdrift for fourteen hours. Three days in the hospital with frozen feet and hands. What saved me, was tearing up an old army blanket with my teeth and wrapping the bits around my feet."

"What do you think of Canadian men?" I asked.

Miss Wayne groaned. "I like men with *chutzpah*. Men with intelligence. You don't seem to have either. Why don't you ask me what's a nice girl like me doing in a place like this?"

"All right," I said. "What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?"

"Making a living, *schmuck*," said Miss Wayne. "Oh? You have a brain! Do they think I take idiot pills every morning? Stripping allows me to live almost as well as I'd like to. I had this intellectual Jewish upbringing. Spoon fed on music and books. By the time I was ten I was giving piano concerts. By fifteen I'd run away into a disastrous child marriage. I had this body so I began modelling and stripping."

"With that costume," I said, "you could move right down to the Royal Alexandra and play in Hair."

Miss Wayne laughed. "I know. The stage and movies have given nudity a kind of cultural veneer that lets them get away with more than I can. When I'm nude, at the end of the act, I have to be careful not to make any erotic movements. Some of my relatives pretend that burlesque and I don't exist. I show up at family gatherings now and then, looking like Auntie Mame, just for the fun of it."

She rummaged through a huge handbag and finally came up with a family picture. She was in furs and feathers and surrounded by what looked like a group of uncomfortable Presbyterians. Miss Wayne had trouble getting all her things back into her handbag.

"A woman's handbag," she said, "is like the state of her mind. I look at mine—and weep."

Also in her handbag she had a dictionary, a book on comedy, and a couple of note books for jokes and comedy routines.

"Actually," she said, "my act is not very erotic. I sell sex tongue-in-cheek. Eventually, I'd like to work in comedy, which is the most difficult of the arts."

"Where can burlesque go from here?" I asked. "Now you've taken it all off?"

"Nudity isn't eroticism," said Miss Wayne. "Flashing—now-you-see-it—now—you-don't, is probably more erotic. I could come out in a leotard up to my neck and do a really erotic act. How strong you work depends on local regulations. I prefer the comic touch."

"Do you worry about things like war and pollution?"

"Yes," said Miss Wayne. "But I don't think worrying does much. I do what I can in my own milieu. My favorite philosophical statement is, 'The world is.' You have to get along in it."

"Are there drawbacks to being a stripper?"

"Oh, yes. The children—I have three—have been hurt by it. 'Your mother's a stripper!' 'Your mother's a stripper!' I'm getting divorced from my second husband now, and the children are staying with him. They say, 'We love you, mummy, but daddy's more stable.'"

"Aren't you stable?"

"I'm a bundle of contradictions. Basically, I'm a show-off. I'm a ham. I've wanted to be an actress—a comedienne—since I was three. That's when they had me dancing around the living room to records."

"Are strippers exhibitionists?"

"Basically, I think, there is a desire to entertain and to be applauded. But there are all kinds. We have Lesbians. Baltimore—where I live—has a lot of strippers now who are men who have undergone a sex change. That's because of Johns Hopkins there, where they do the operation. One club won't use them—the owner says it chases the real girls away. There's the same variations in male strippers."

"Male strippers?" I said.

"Yes," said Miss Wayne. "The Mermaid in New York is a male strip house. They have homosexuals, sex-changes, but some are just men making a dollar."

"You're putting me on," I said.

"I never lie," said Miss Wayne. "It isn't worth the trouble. I wonder why people find the truth so disconcerting?"

"Do you consider yourself an ideal wife and mother?"

"No," said Miss Wayne. "I dance to a different drum."

I don't know whether I'll marry my boy friend or not. We've been sleeping together since we met but he keeps saying, 'I think I'll find a nice, ordinary 60-a-week typist and marry her.' A while ago we were in a restaurant when a nice ordinary wife came in, pushed my coat off a chair onto the floor, then gave her husband hell and said she wouldn't sleep with him anymore because of something he'd done. 'There's your nice, ordinary, 60-a-week typist,' I said to my boy friend."

Miss Wayne was waving her hands around as she talked. "I talk with my hands," she laughed. "What do you expect from a nice Jewish girl from Brooklyn? Did I tell you about being raped?"

"No," I said.

"I got lost on this country road in Georgia," said Miss Wayne. "I'd stopped at this gas station, but it was closed. Another car stopped, with a man in it, and before I knew what was happening I had a knife at my throat. All I could see was this knife and the leather gauntlets on his wrists, which knife fighters wear in New York. He said, 'You know what I'm going to have to do to you afterwards.'"

"How did you save yourself?"

"It might just be useful to your readers," said Miss Wayne, "the way things are going. First, I didn't panic. If I had I know he would have killed me. Then I had to convince him I wouldn't report him, and that I liked the idea. When I got home, I threw up and I went into shock. At least I was alive."

"That must have taken a bit of doing," I said.

"You could say," said Miss Wayne, "that it's my greatest performance so far."

Miss Wayne went on. "Another thing, I think there's a tragic-comic element to all life. What was running through my female mind all the time was that, even if he didn't kill me, he might scar me with that knife and ruin my career."

Miss Wayne stopped talking and looked at the watch on her dresser.

"Oh, oh," she said. "You'll have to excuse me while I get dressed for the next show."

Chapter 4

A TYPICAL PUBLISHER'S SON

Dateline: Toronto 1948

It was nearly midnight and the Press Club bar was crowded. O'Malley, the Trib photographer, squeezed his short, fat body in beside me. He ordered a triple rye. Glancing furtively over his shoulder, he raised the drink in a trembling hand and gulped it down.

I asked, "What's the matter? A little man beginning to follow you?"

"Yes," said O'Malley.

Naturally, I thought O'Malley hadn't heard me properly, so I repeated.

"What's the matter? A little man beginning to follow you?"

"Yes," said O'Malley.

I thought this remark over slowly, while O'Malley was ordering another drink. Perhaps O'Malley's mind *had* snapped. He'd been saddled with young Lamport, the son of the Trib publisher, for the past week, which might drive anyone to drink. On the other hand, perhaps O'Malley was trying to pull my leg. Right over the bar at this moment there hung a blow-up of one of his most famous hoaxes. A shot of His Worship, the Mayor, presenting the keys to the city to a man descending from a train. The man in question was not, as O'Malley had told the mayor, a Hollywood celebrity, but a convicted bank embezzler being brought back for trial.

I looked at O'Malley closely. He didn't seem to be joking. His face was haggard, pale and he hadn't shaved.

He blurted out. "Hansen, can you see a gnome behind me?"

My trouble is being too responsive. Interviewing a guy, I find myself nodding sympathetically, even when he is a murderer. I almost swung around to see if there was a gnome behind O'Malley. I *did* take a quick peek in the mirror over the bar.

"Is he there now?" I asked.

O'Malley rubbed a hand over his eyes and back over his bald head. "He shouldn't be, anyway," he said wearily. "His plane isn't due until midnight."

I shut my eyes tightly for a moment. Either O'Malley, or myself, I thought, or both of us, must be dead drunk.

I asked, casually, "What does this—this little man look like?"

"Oh, just an ordinary gnome," said O'Malley. "Green suit, trimmed with red. Stocking cap, leather breeches, shoes curl up at the points—you know the type."

My hand tightened around my glass. I began to get mad. I poked O'Malley in the chest with my finger.

"All right," I said. "So you're O'Malley, the great humorist. The guy who makes people pose all afternoon for a camera without any film in it. But this is me—Hansen—remember? Not some cub like young Lamport!"

"I wish it were a gag," said O'Malley. He looked down at his empty glass and then his mind seemed to wander off. Every now and then he gave a little shudder, like a man in a dream.

I poked him with my finger again. "What do you mean—it's not a gag? Is there a red and green gnome behind you, or isn't there?" My voice was a little loud when I finished.

"Please, gentlemen," said the barman.

O'Malley said listlessly, "I don't know for sure. I just meant if there *was* a gnome following me, that's the way he'd be dressed."

"Is this the same gnome that's flying an aeroplane?"

"He's not *flying* an aeroplane," said O'Malley. "He's on the regular midnight flight from Boston."

I returned to my drink. The hell with him. I thought. It's his gnome. Let him worry about it. This talk was getting nowhere. I ordered a triple rye.

* * *

O'Malley hauled out his watch. "Got to be getting back to him," he mumbled.

I tried to ignore this, but after struggling a moment, I gave up.

I asked, "Back to the gnome?"

"No. Back to Lamport."

"Old Man Lamport?"

"No. His kid."

"Where is he?"

"I've got him locked up in my apartment."

I took a deep breath. "Look," I said, trying to be calm, "you can play your practical jokes. You can collect gnomes. But you can't go around locking up young Lamport, even if he should be. You know how the Old Man feels about him. You want to get fired?"

O'Malley took out a handkerchief and wiped some of the sweat off his glistening head. "I know, I know," he said. "But I had to. He's gone insane. And it's my fault."

This, I could understand. I ordered another triple rye. I asked, "How long has he been out of his mind?"

"Ever since he saw the gnome."

Here was this gnome again.

O'Malley looked at his watch again. "Well, I gotta be getting back to the apartment."

"Wait a minute," I said. "I'm going with you."

* * *

We picked up our overcoats from the hat-check girl and went out into the night. In the taxi O'Malley began to talk.

"It starts as a harmless joke. I am at the circus having a drink with the advance man, when in walks this gnome. For a minute I think I will have to give up liquor, but it turns out this gnome is merely a midget, dressed up in a gnome's costume, and he sits down and has a drink with us.

"Afterwards I am thinking what a gag it would be to have the gnome walk in on some drunken reporter, who didn't know he was a midget. But I can't figure out how to do it. It looks like just another good idea nothing will come of.

"The next day I get handed young Lamport to teach the newspaper business. You know what he is like, a kid all steamed up about being a reporter, and not much sense of humor. Well, that night we are late coming back into town from an assignment and he decides to sleep at my apartment.

"We have a couple of drinks and I begin to think about the gnome. So when young Lamport goes to bed I phone up this midget at the circus and offer him ten bucks to come over and help me play a joke. He wants twenty-five bucks.

"So I say all right and he comes over and goes into the bedroom, jumps up on the end of the bed and perches there.

"Young Lamport sits up, switches on the light, and then hollers, 'O'Malley! There's a gnome in the bed!'"

"I go into the bedroom.

"What's the trouble?" I ask him.

"He points at the gnome. 'Look!'"

"I pretend I can't see anything. 'Look at what?'"

"'A gnome!' he shouts. 'Right on the foot of the bed! He's winking at me!'"

"I keep a dead pan. I look all around the room and under the bed. 'There's nothing here,' I tell him. 'It's just your imagination. You better turn off the light and get a little rest.'"

"I see it, I tell you!" shouts Lamport.

"Suddenly he leaps from the bed, grabs my Speed Graphic and presses the button. The flash bulb goes off right in the gnome's face and nearly blinds him. He bolts from the apartment banging into the bedroom door on the way out.

"Lamport is jumping up and down, shouting, 'Got him! I've got a picture of him!'"

"I try to calm him down, but he is too excited. He insists that we go down to the Trib darkroom and develop the picture right away.

"While we are putting it through the soup I am nearly killing myself with laughter. We dump it in the fix and turn on the darkroom light."

O'Malley paused, took off his hat, and wiped the top of his head.

* * *

"The negative is a complete blank. What has happened is that in his excitement he has left the slide in over the film. I do it half the time myself and, after all, he is only an amateur photographer.

"Well," I tell him. "Too bad. I guess gnomes just won't register on ordinary panchromatic film. Like ghosts."

"Young Lamport looks at me intently for a moment. Then he says, 'You don't believe that I saw a gnome, do you, O'Malley. You're just trying to humor me because I'm the boss' son.'"

"I say of course I believe him. But I suppose because I really do believe him I sound as though I don't. Anyway he makes me lend him one of my cameras, which he loads up, and says he is going to carry it around until the gnome shows up again. He's going to get a picture and prove it to me.

"We go back to my apartment. The next morning he is kind of quiet, having been awake half the night waiting for this gnome. He is getting pretty serious, and he won't talk about the gnome, and I am thinking perhaps it's time I told him it was only a joke. I don't want him to get too mad when he finds out.

"Just then he jumps up from the breakfast table, knocks over a chair and runs for his camera.

"He comes back, shouting, 'There he is, O'Malley! Right behind you!'"

"I look around, quickly, thinking perhaps the gnome has come back, or has been hiding in the apartment all night. But there is nothing behind me but the kitchen sink, full of dishes.

"I try to calm Lamport down, but he dodges around me and shoots off another picture. Right away we have to head for the Trib darkroom to develop it.

"This time, of course, there is nothing on the negative but a sharp picture of my kitchen sink, stacked up with dishes.

"Lamport is holding it, still dripping, up to the light. 'That settles it,' he says. 'I'm going to have to use color film. So the gnome can't disappear against the background.'"

O'Malley opened the window of the taxi, then, with fumbling hands, he lit himself a cigarette. He continued:

"That night we are picking up a society page picture of a very dignified affair at the Hotel Biltmore. I am talk-

ing to the Governor's wife, trying to set up a picture when Lamport pops up behind us.

"There he is again, O'Malley!" he screams. "The gnome!"

"He then, since he's using color film, bangs off this big blue bulb right in the face of me and the Governor's wife. I grab him and hustle him out of the hotel before we get arrested and put in a booby hatch. He is babbling away all the time we are driving back to the Trib, about now he's got the picture this time and now may be I'll believe him.

"It takes some time to process this color film, and when we do get through there is nothing on it except a shot of me and the Governor's wife standing there with our mouths hanging open. In one way this is a relief, as Lamport has got me half-convinced there is a gnome following me.

"I decide the time has come to tell Lamport it is all only a joke. There is no such things as gnomes. When I am finished he gets a peculiar look in his eye. Cunning. Says that I'm part of a big conspiracy trying to stop him from getting the Picture of the Week. He says he'll get the gnome for sure next time, because he's going to load up with infra-red film, which they use for photographing spirits and ghosts. He says if I don't help him, he'll go to his old man."

* * *

O'Malley stopped talking and wiped his face again. "That's why I've got him locked up in the apartment. If he goes to his old man—" O'Malley shuddered.

While I was thinking about all this the cab stopped in front of O'Malley's apartment house. O'Malley paid the driver.

As we got into the elevator, I said, "Why don't you take him to the circus and show him the gnome. Shock treatment. It might bring him to his senses."

"The circus," said O'Malley, "left town. I just located it in Boston yesterday. I had to pay that damn midget three hundred dollars and his expenses to fly here."

"Where'd you get that kind of money?"

A look of pain crossed O'Malley's face. "I had to sell my car."

We went into O'Malley's apartment. He opened the door of the bedroom, looked in, then quietly closed the door again.

"He's sleeping."

O'Malley began to pace up and down. I found a bottle of rye in the kitchen and poured myself a drink.

In a little while there was a knock at the door. O'Malley hurried to open it, and when he stood aside, I saw the midget standing there, dressed in an ordinary business suit. He was smoking a big cigar.

He strolled in. "Hello," he said. "Name's Brown. John Amos Brown." He offered his hand.

I bent over and shook it gravely. "Hansen," I said. "Pleased to meet you."

"Have you got the costume?" asked O'Malley anxiously.

The midget nodded, puffing on his cigar.

"Then get it on," said O'Malley. "Let's hurry."

The midget climbed into a chair, leaned back leisurely and tipped his ash on the floor.

"I didn't realize just how tough a job this was going to be," he said. "I'll need another fifty bucks."

"Like hell," said O'Malley.

The midget shrugged, got out of the chair, picked up his small bag and headed for the door.

O'Malley jumped to bar the way. "All right, all right," he said hastily. "Here—I'll give it to you now."

* * *

The midget counted the bills and carefully tucked them away in his wallet. This, I noticed, was normal in size, if not bigger. He opened up his travelling bag and began to change his clothes. I went for another drink.

When I came back, I blinked. In that red and green costume, with the turned up toes, he looked more like a gnome than a gnome would. He and O'Malley were lined up, ready to go in the bedroom.

"Take that cigar out of your mouth," said O'Malley.

The midget handed it to me. The three of us trooped into the bedroom. O'Malley leading.

Young Lamport opened his eyes when O'Malley turned on the light. He was a good-looking blond youngster, with a friendly face, which made it seem all the more tragic what had happened to him.

When he caught sight of me, he smiled, "Hello, Frank."

I said hello. At least he still remembered people. That was something. I noticed the Speed Graphic sitting on the small table right beside the bed, with a pile of those black flash-bulbs they use for infra-red film. It was so pitiful I felt a lump in my throat.

O'Malley walked around the bed and sat down on a chair. The gnome climbed up over the foot of the bed and perched there.

Young Lamport just lay there, a kind of happy smile on his face, as though he were listening to church bells or something.

There was a long, awkward silence. The gnome fidgetted uneasily on the end of the bed. I looked at O'Malley.

The perspiration was popping right out of his head. He wiped it with a handkerchief. He stared at young Lamport. He licked his lips, swallowed hard.

* * *

The silence went on and on.

Finally I heard O'Malley's strangled voice.

"Lamport! Don't—don't you notice anything?"

Lamport's round blue eyes came to rest on O'Malley.

"Like what?" he asked innocently.

O'Malley's voice cracked. "The gnome!" he shouted.

"He's sitting right there. On the foot of the bed!"

Lamport sat up a little in the bed. His eyes travelled all around the room, went from O'Malley to me and back to O'Malley again. There was a look of bewilderment on his face.

"What gnome?" he said.

O'Malley didn't move. I don't think he would have moved if the building had burned down around him. He just sat there, staring at Lamport. So did the gnome.

Lamport kept a straight face as long as he could. Then a grin crept over it, and he began, slowly, to laugh.

Eventually he was rolling on the bed, choking with laughter, tears streaming down his face.

You couldn't blame him. I began to laugh myself. It was that expression on O'Malley's face. The more you looked at it, the funnier everything seemed.

Young Lamport got control of himself briefly. He picked up the Speed Graphic and, before he collapsed on the bed again, he flashed a picture of O'Malley sitting there.

You had to hand it to him. For a publisher's son, he had picked up the newspaper business very fast.

Chapter 5

THE DEATH OF A GOLFER

Dateline: Toronto 1963

It was a perfect day for golf. The sun shone. The sky was blue. The temperature was in the seventies. It was Monday, Aug. 5, 1963, and Civic Holiday in Toronto. By 9 o'clock in the morning, the parking lot at the Oakdale Golf and Country Club was filling up rapidly.

One of the golfers already waiting at the pro shop was businessman Harold "Hersch" Kalles, 41. A pleasant, well-liked man, Kalles was the vice-president of a men's tailoring firm established by his father and patronized by some of the city's leading professional men.

Harold Kalles had three young sons. He and his pretty wife, Sybil, were one of the most popular couples at the country club dances. Kalles was playing that morning with a friend named Lou Tureg. Just before their tee-time came up, they were approached by Joseph Marks, another Oakdale member.

"Have you got room for another?" asked Marks.

"Yes," said Kalles. "There's just the two of us."

Marks joined them at the first tee and shortly after 9, the threesome teed off. Tureg and Marks had caddies, but Kalles pulled his own golf cart.

Kalles used an iron off the first tee. "My woods are off," he explained.

Using an iron off the tees did not help him much. He scored badly on the first three holes.

The fourth hole doubled back parallel with the third, the two fairways separated by a stand of trees. As the three golfers headed for the fourth tee, the two caddies took up a position about 150 yards down the fairway, to watch for the drives. One of the two caddies was 16-year-old Bernardino Favret, known to his school chums as "Dino." He was to give the clearest description of the tragedy that now followed.

Tureg's drive was down the right side of the fairway and rolled out of sight into a puddle of "casual" water

(water left by rain) in the middle of a fairway bunker. Marks's drive was down the middle. The caddies did not see Kalles's iron shot from the tee at all. They did hear the sound of a ball hitting leaves and branches in the woods on the left of the fairway. Kalles had hooked his shot into the trees.

While the two caddies went to mark the balls of the men they were caddying for, Kalles walked down the fairway and disappeared into the woods.

The Oakdale Golf Course is made up of three different nines. Using them in different combinations provides three different 18-holes layouts. On that particular Monday morning, Dr. Marvin Lester, a Toronto skin specialist, was playing the eighth hole of another nine, near the one being played by Tureg, Marks and Kalles.

Lester had hit his drive, and was walking down the eighth fairway. As the doctor and his partner came up to his ball, they heard yelling.

The doctor hit his second, and was watching it soar toward the green when the yelling was resumed, this time more loudly. He heard the words:

"Get a cart Get a doctor!"

While the words were registering on his mind, he looked across the fourth fairway and saw the figures of Kalles and Marks stumbling toward the clubhouse. Even as Lester looked, he saw Kalles fall to his knees, clutching his throat.

As Lester's partner said to him later: "One minute you were standing there beside me, the next minute you were a hundred yards down the fairway."

By the time Lester reached the two men, a golf service cart, driven by one of the grounds keepers, had arrived on the scene. The driver had been driving along a nearby fairway and heard Marks's cries for help. Marks had helped Kalles into the back of the cart, where he lay, his legs dangling out the rear.

Lester saw that Kalles was bleeding from his mouth and throat. Blood covered his face and hands. A stream of blood, about the thickness of a lead pencil, was pouring from the left side of his throat.

Lester had no idea what had happened, but he reacted instinctively, jumping into the cart and applying pressure to stop the flow of blood. He later estimated Kalles had already lost a third of his blood supply.

"Where'll I go?" asked the grounds keeper.

"Get to the pro shop!" shouted the doctor.

The cart jolted across the golf course. During the wild ride, Kalles spoke only twice.

The first thing he said was: "Is it my jugular?"

Squeezing desperately, Lester said: "Hersch, let's not worry about what it is now. Let's get you fixed up first."

Later, crossing a small bridge, Kalles said: "I'm having trouble breathing."

Lester relaxed his pressure momentarily, but had to re-apply it immediately as the blood spurted again. "Keep coughing," he directed Kalles. He was afraid Kalles would breathe the blood from his throat into his lungs.

* * *

On the practice tee a 21-year-old pro-shop assistant, Billy Simpson, was giving a lesson to Marlene Chapelle, the blonde, teenage daughter of the club swimming coach. The appearance of the blood-spattered pair in the golf cart froze them in their tracks. It was an unbelievable sight.

Alex Shields, the club's teaching pro, was sitting in the pro shop when Simpson came running in shouting:

"Emergency! Emergency! Call an ambulance! Where's Dr. Garbe?"

Dr. William Garbe, another skin specialist, had been standing around, waiting to tee off. In his excitement Simpson ran right past him. Now, while Shields called Police Emergency, Dr. Garbe went to see what was causing the commotion. When he saw Lester and Kalles, both of whom he knew, soaked in blood, Dr. Garbe was thunderstruck. Kalles was already turning blue-grey.

Lester said to Garbe: "Bill, my arm's getting numb."

Garbe ran for towels and returned, relieving Lester in applying pressure to the wound.

Const. George R. Riggs, Metropolitan Police, soon arrived. Then came an ambulance. Garbe crawled into the

ambulance alongside Kalles's stretcher, maintaining his pressure on Kalles's throat.

Humber Memorial Hospital was only a mile away and Kalles was admitted to Emergency.

A call was placed for the surgeon on call. But the chief surgeon of the hospital, Dr. George Culnan, happened by and immediately took charge. He began anti-shock treatment and ordered the operating room prepared.

Kalles's last words to Dr. Garbe were: "Call Sybil."

During the next few days Kalles's condition improved. A tragedy seemed to have been averted by the lucky nearness of doctors and the prompt action of all concerned. So far as was known, it was the first time a golfer had been brought to the edge of death by his own club, and the story was featured on sports pages across the continent.

Meanwhile Const. Riggs began an investigation of the accident.

When Kalles and Lester had disappeared in the golf cart, Marks had been left standing on the fairway, dazed, and wondering if he'd been having a nightmare. Young Dino Favret, the caddy, went into the woods and returned with Kalles's golf cart.

"What happened?" asked Marks.

"His club broke, sir," said Favret.

"Did you see the club?" asked Marks.

Young Dino nodded. He had seen the two halves of the club, a No. 5 iron, lying in the woods near Kalles's cart. He had shrunk from picking up the pieces. The jagged end of one was beaded with blood.

"You'd better bring the club too," said Marks.

Dino fetched the club and handed the two pieces to Marks. Marks got the impression that the bloodied end of the shaft was the part attached to the grip of the club. He instantly formed the theory that Kalles had broken the club and stuck himself with the broken handle at the finish of his swing.

The police investigation records that the blood and tissue were on the piece of shaft still attached to the head of the club. Marks admits this must be right, but it was not the first impression he received.

* * *

There is another dissimilarity in the recollections of young Dino Favret and Marks. Dino says Kalles returned to the fairway after first failing to find his original ball and hit a second ball. When he dubbed this shot, he went back into the woods again to look for his first ball. Marks does not recall Kalles hitting a second ball at all. Eyewitnesses of disasters, of course, often disagree.

Kalles was lost sight of for a while, while those with him looked for Tureg's ball in the fairway bunker. It was under casual water and they had to rake the water to find the ball.

Dino was on his way to help Kalles when the latter shouted, from the woods.

"All right! I've got it!"

Kalles returned to the fairway for his golf cart and took it into the woods. There is plenty of space between the trees at this point. Kalles was clearly visible to Dino as he lined up his shot. As Kalles made his swing, Dino looked away toward Tureg, whose turn to hit it now was. Dino says Tureg was not yet addressing the ball, so he glanced back at Kalles.

In that split second he looked away, the accident happened.

To Dino's surprise, he saw Kalles walking rapidly from the woods, "taking big steps and holding his throat." There was obviously something wrong. He saw Kalles stride toward Marks. In the quietness of the morning, he heard Marks saying excitedly: "What's the matter?"

They had begun walking toward the clubhouse when Kalles fell to the ground and Marks began shouting.

"Get a cart! Get a doctor!"

The police questioning of Dino was designed to eliminate the possibility of anything but accident.

"Could you see Mr. Kalles clearly at the time?"

"Yes."

"Could anyone else have been near him in the woods?"

"No."

"Was Mr. Kalles in a rage? Was there heavy betting on the game?"

"No betting so far as I know. It just seemed like an ordinary round of golf."

Marks confirms this. "We weren't even playing for the lunch."

Where Dino saw Kalles swing his club, Const. Riggs found a small tree. About 18 inches from the ground, the tree is gouged for about six inches. It is possible this was the tree Kalles struck. The broken club was found nearby.

The police took the broken club to Horn, McAnuff & Hastings, a firm of consulting engineers. While no formal report was filed, the firm says this:

"At the request of the Attorney-General's laboratory, we examined a fractured golf club delivered to us by P.C.s Riggs and Hill of No. 3 Distric Traffic Department, Metropolitan Toronto Police.

"The club was a No. 5 iron which had suffered a mid-shaft bending failure. The fracture was so oriented that the compressed side of the failure was nearly parallel with the open face of the head and on the same side of the club.

"There was no evidence of attrition or indentation of the shaft in the vicinity of the failure which could be considered compatible with a direct impact of the shaft by any solid object."

What this last paragraph means, in layman's language, is that the engineers, Jack Hastings and Lance McAnuff, do *not* believe Kalles wrapped the club around the tree in a burst of temper. They believe this would have left marks on the shaft of the club where it went around the tree. The evidence of the caddy, Dino Favret, tends to bear this out. He does not believe Kalles had time to take a second, angry swing, in the brief moment he looked away from him.

Nor do the engineers believe the shaft failed in mid-swing, as there were no signs of an earlier, weakening fracture. The club was of good quality, made by a well-known manufacturer.

The engineers deduce the toe of the club struck some object, possibly a tree, twisted in Kalles's hands and buckled forward. The jagged bottom half of the club then rebounded upward to strike Kalles in the throat.

To this writer there seems at least one other possibility. Harold Kalles was a strong, right-handed hitter. United States Golf Association tests have proved club-head speed

at impact may exceed 100 miles per hour. It does not seem impossible that the shaft of the club hit a tree and that the clubhead half flew back around the tree in the arc of Kalles's swing before separating. This is consistent with the direction of the wound in the left side of Kalles's throat. Also, the compressed side of the club fracture is on the leading edge of the shaft.

However, the engineers do not agree with this theory. They say had the shaft of the club struck the tree, there would be almost inevitably some mark on the shaft. Also there would be a gradual curve, following the shape of the tree, in the vicinity of the fracture.

The one person who knew exactly how it happened was, of course, Kalles, quietly recovering in hospital. On Friday, Aug. 9, four days after the accident, Const. Riggs was told Kalles would be well enough to talk to on Monday. But suddenly, on the morning of Saturday, Aug. 10, Kalles died. The immediate cause of death was edema (swelling of tissue) and respiratory failure, caused by the injury.

* * *

With him, Kalles took the only exact knowledge of how the accident happened. Even after Kalles died, Const. Riggs continued his investigation in an effort to pin down the circumstances beyond the shadow of a doubt. Hoping that Kalles might have dropped some remark which would throw more light on it, Riggs talked to every one of the 27 people who had had some contact with him after the accident. The list included relatives, doctors, nurses and others. But not with any of them had Kalles discussed how it happened. Because of his condition they had not pressed him with questions.

Dr. Lester, first to come to his aid, summed it up: "I've never been a fatalist. But it's the only way I can rationalize such an unbelievable accident. It just doesn't make sense."

Chapter 6

A TYPICAL SPORTS WRITER

Dateline: Toronto 1968

Last night, around midnight, I was wakened from sleep by the telephone. On the line was Duncan Macpherson of the Toronto Star, said by some to be the best political cartoonist in the world.

Judging by the clinking glasses and loud voices in the background, Macpherson was phoning from the Toronto Men's Press Club, an establishment from which Macpherson has been expelled three times, twice for life.

Macpherson said, "You and I have just been invited to have breakfast at the home of Ted Reeve, legendary sports figure."

"How nice," I said.

"I don't know where his house is," said Macpherson, "so I'll pick you up just before dawn and we'll go over there together."

"How jolly," I said. "Are you going to bed at all — or just arriving directly from the Press Club?"

"Good-night," said Macpherson, hanging up.

I went back to bed but slept fitfully. The last time Macpherson had come to my house from a celebration he had crept into my bedroom and turned my bed over on top of me while I was asleep. A rather rude awakening.

Macpherson showed up, as promised, with the sunrise. He was bright-eyed and clean-shaven. He must have gone home to shave, at least, because he is a hairy, primitive type and sprouts a beard while the average man is developing a five-o'clock shadow.

We drove to 253 Glenmanor Drive, in the Beach, where Ted Reeve lived with his bride, Alvern, known affectionately as "Al," "Mother," "Ma," or "The Iron Fireman." In the years Ted had played lacrosse and football, she'd also distinguished herself at baseball, basketball, tennis and golf.

Mrs. Reeve opened the door to us. With her was *Bozo V*, the fifth of a series of Airedale dogs owned by the Reeve

family. The rest of the family consisted of daughter Susan, 21, and son, Joe, a Film Board cameraman, presently in Europe.

Mrs. Reeve and Bozo V led us to the master, sitting in a small sunroom at the south side of the house. Ted greeted us warmly, nearly crushing our hands in his large, gnarled fist. He reminded me of the Roman Colosseum, a ruin now, but still magnificent.

His unique blend of literacy and toughness will always be remembered in terms of the 1930 Grey Cup game in which Balmy Beach defeated Regina 11-6. Altho playing with a painful shoulder injury, he made victory possible by blocking two crucial Regina kicks. In the locker room, after, he quipped:

"When I was young and in my prime,
I used to block kicks all the time.
But now that I am old and gray,
I only block them twice a day."

I'M ONLY A COMMON OLD WORKING CHAP

Now, on this sunny morning, 38 years later, Ted said, "And what brings you two here this morning?"

Macpherson had a laughing fit, in which Ted joined, when it was explained he'd invited us the night before at the Press Club.

"Well," said Ted, "nobody needs an invitation here. Will you have a drink of rum? The breakfast of champions!"

He held up his glass, containing a dark mixture of Hudson Bay Rum and water, his favorite drink.

Macpherson, a drinker of no small reputation himself, nevertheless turned pale at the idea of starting the day with this mixture.

"If you don't mind," he said, "I think I'll just have a cold beer."

I settled for straight coffee.

Ted was reminded of my late father, an old friend who'd been a trainer and coach when Ted was playing. "Your dad," said Ted, "was one of the world's great street fighters — and the worst automobile driver the world has ever seen — outside of Bobby Porter's dad."

"Those old trainers," said Ted, "Joe Carrothers at Varsity, Fordham, Bonesetter Bannister, they didn't have much education, but they had a kind of trial-and-error knowledge that could get players back in the game. When I was coaching down at Queen's — surrounded by great doctors — I was still smuggling football players back here to get them taped up by those old guys. Before that, I remember I was having a bad season myself. I had two sprained ankles, water-on-the-knee and a bad tendon. They fixed me up with a kind of basket-weave taping job on both legs." He laughed. "I couldn't move sideways, but I could run *forward*. That's what counted!"

IT'S STYLE ALL THE WHILE, ALL THE WHILE (Old Riverdale Lacrosse Club Song)

Duncan Macpherson, squinting at the rising sun coming in the window, said to Ted: "I guess you're used to getting up at this hour, to get your column in. . . ."

"In the old days," said Ted, "it was like clockwork. Up at dawn, write the column, get it in the paper. This new system you have to turn the column in a day ahead. It ain't the same. To me it's like writing a magazine feature." He grinned. "Still, it don't bother me too much. It's better than working for a living."

He added, "One thing does bother me. In the old days you was sending down the copy in short takes. You got proofs back and you could catch mistakes before they got in the paper. Now, I don't get a proof, so any time I try to do anything different, it comes out wrong. Take that Green Bay — Chicago Bears game. They win the game on a free kick, a very unusual penalty which goes back to one of those forgotten rules in football. So I look up *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, which probably has the first description of a football game ever written, and I make a reference to the Head Prefect, *Pater Brooke*, but it comes out in the column as Peter Brooke, so the reader's wondering what I'm going on about now. Anyway, Dunc, I guess you don't have those problems as a cartoonist."

"Sometimes," said Macpherson. "One of my early cartoons had a lot of white space in it, and somebody dropped

an ad for a venetian blind company into it. That's the way it ran in the first edition."

Ted laughed. "Maybe that's why Breughel and those Dutch painters filled up the canvas. So nobody could slip anything in on 'em."

"Another time," said Macpherson, "I had a native lying on the ground at the bottom of a cartoon, during the South African trouble. The paper had some rule about heads having to be at the top of pictures, so they just turned my cartoon upside down. It didn't make any sense at all, with him flying out the top of the drawing, but that's how it ran."

The front door opened and a young man wearing a windbreaker joined us.

"Hello," said Ted. "How'd you guys do with the Nomads?"

"We beat them!" said the newcomer. "Champions at last. Dennis must have rolled over in his grave."

Ted raised his glass and cried in mock heroic tones. "Rangers over all!"

He introduced the newcomer as George Young. "Not the George Young played centre-half for Glasgow Rangers; *not* the George Young swam the Catalina Channel; but George Young, coach of the Balmy Beach rugger team. George dropped in here for breakfast one Sunday morning and he didn't move out till eight years later. Now he's married and got a son. Dirty bugger named the boy Hamish. Imagine doing that to your own son? The kid'll be in schoolyard fights all his life."

Ted shook his head. "It may be worse than my own school days. My mother left long curls on me till I was seven years old. I looked like Tiny Tim. We moved from the Beach to Parkdale and I was sent down to Queen Victoria School. Every son-of-a-bitch there figured he could pull my curls. So I'd whack him. Trouble was, then days I fought with my eyes shut, which is no way to win fights. Every time I'd get chased home. If I hadn't gotten my hair cut — I might have become the world's greatest sprinter!"

"Anyways," he said to Young, "you win another championship for the Beach. We should have won more — we've

had some good, big guys here — but times have changed. Back when I started coaching Malvern Grads, we owed so much to Spaldings for equipment, we had to play 17 games just to get even. Those days we had to win a championship to afford a beer party. These kids today throw a party if they get through a good *practice*!"

Ted laughed. "I remember Lefty Gomez saying to me, 'I was managing Binghampton — we lose 17 straight — it rains one night — no game — so we hold the Victory Banquet!'"

Another visitor entered the Reeve house. This time it was Alfie Jones, wartime sergeant in the 30th Battery, Light Artillery, which was Ted's World War II unit. It was turning into a typical Sunday morning. On those special Sunday mornings following a Grey Cup game, the crowd of newspapermen, athletes and musicians filled the house.

Sergeant Jones had come to discuss an upcoming reunion of army buddies. He reported that one veteran would not be coming because his wife wouldn't let him out. She didn't approve of the drinking that went on at reunions.

"You know," said Ted, "that guy was absolutely fearless overseas. I can understand it now. He preferred getting killed, to coming back."

Sergeant Jones was known to the Reeves as Eaglebeak. This reminded Ted of a nose-to-nose picture of himself and Jimmy Durante which had hung in the old Press Club. Ted's schnozzola was almost as big as Durante's.

"That picture was taken by Jack Milne — Gib Milne's brother," said Ted. "A nice, very quiet guy. I'm afraid he's near the end of the road. He's in hospital now."

"What's the trouble?" somebody asked.

"The Big 'C,'" said Ted. He gave his glass to Mrs. Reeve for a refill. He asked George Young to put some music on the record player.

"Mother and I have a thousand old 78's out there," he said, "and neither of us can work the machine."

While George Young was tinkering with the record player, I was reminded of a scene involving Ted at the old Press Club at 99 Yonge Street. Greg Clark, another famous

Toronto newspaperman, had entered the club just after lunch and encountered Ted. They made an incongruous pair. Greg, barely over five feet tall; Ted, over six feet. And men of two different styles.

"Greg!" said Ted. "Good to see you. Let me buy you a drink."

"Oh, no," said Greg. "I'm on my way home to my wife. And I mustn't come home with the smell of liquor on my breath."

"Good God!" cried Ted. "If I didn't come home with liquor on my breath, my wife wouldn't know me!"

WON'T YOU COME HOME, BILL BAILEY,
WON'T YOU COME HOME

George Young got the record player going, and our conversation continued with a Dixieland background. It turned now to the Sports Council and the funds set aside for promoting sport in Canada.

A few years before Ted had attended a meeting in Ottawa and he had been disappointed.

"There was some guys there," he said, "with pretty good ideas. Using the schools — providing playground supervisors — but Dief wasn't listening. I don't know what he was hearing. But there was this cocktail party scheduled and after a while you could see they was just waiting for us to get the hell out. This government, I think, is making a few more yards. They're peeling it off in some funny places, but at least some of it's getting down to the athletes. We gotta get rid of this idea about amateur sport. Show me an athlete who's an amateur —"

"I was an amateur," protested Mrs. Reeve.

"No, Mother," said Ted. "That was before you married me. Now you're a semi-pro."

Ted now launched into a description of his adventures in book publishing, when he had undertaken to print and distribute a collection of his sport columns, called "Twenty-Five Sporting Extras."

For a drawing for the cover, he'd given Harry Hall, the Telegram cartoonist, fifteen dollars.

"I was real greedy them days," said Ted. "Remember,

when you're doing a column a day for a hundred bananas a week, the only way you can get ahead is to repeat some of them columns. I had a lot of columns repeated by request. *My* request, it was! Anyways, then I needed a printer, so I phones up Frank Selke at the Gardens then, and says, Frank, who prints your programs?"

It was an amusing story, but Mrs. Reeve began to interrupt Ted with corrections and comments of her own. Ted suffered this for a while, then, when he realized he was losing the floor, he came out with one of his wonderful lines.

"All right, Mother," he said grandly, with a wave of his hand, "*you* tell the stories. I'll take the interruptions."

Chapter 7

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARILYN MONROE

Dateline: Niagara Falls 1952

Miss Marilyn Monroe is a young actress who surged into prominence in such Movies as "All About Eve," "Don't Bother To Knock," and "We're Not Married." She has also posed for some very beautiful calendars. Recently she has been referred to as "the hottest thing in Hollywood," meaning, of course, that she is an actress with a lot in front of her.

A short time ago she came to Niagara Falls, to act in a movie called "Niagara" which was being made by Twentieth-Century Fox. Mr. Frank Neill, a roly-poly publicity man, kindly arranged for me to interview Miss Monroe.

On the way up to her room in the General Brock Hotel, we squeezed into an elevator which contained a fat man and his wife. This man was even fatter than Mr. Neill. Apparently they were friends of his. He introduced them as Mr. and Mrs. Don Wilson.

I asked Mr. Wilson what line of work he was in.

He looked at me a moment. He said, "Well, right now I'm playing the Shredded Wheat King in this picture. But radio is my regular line."

He turned back to Mr. Neill. "When I left Hollywood Jack was asking me what I'm supposed to be doing in this picture. So I just sent him a wire—MY PART CALLS FOR ME TO GO OVER NIAGARA FALLS ON WATER SKIIS STOP IF I LIVE I GET MONROE!"

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Neill burst out laughing.

Mrs. Wilson said, "Ha, ha." But she didn't look very amused.

When they left the elevator I said to Mr. Neill. "Don't other women like Miss Monroe?"

"Hate her guts," said Mr. Neill. "Eighth floor, please."

I shook my head. "I wonder why men are so excited about her—and yet women don't like her."

Mr. Neill began to laugh again, then he looked at me and stopped. We walked to the door of 810 and Mr. Neill

knocked.

"Who is it?" called a feminine voice.

"It's me, Honey!" called back Mr. Neill. "Butterball" Are you decent?"

"Just a minute!" There was a second's pause. "All right!" Miss Monroe was sitting on the bed, with her blond hair up in curlers. She was wearing a beautiful, white terry-cloth bathrobe, and little else. Nothing else.

There was a large sign propped up beside the bed, crudely lettered, "BEWARE OF DOGS." On the bed were several books and a script. On the bed table was a small, folding alarm clock and, in a leather folding case, a picture of Joe DiMaggio, a baseball player. Miss Monroe was evidently a baseball fan.

"Hello, Butterball," said Miss Monroe.

Mr. Neill explained that I wished to take some photographs showing why Miss Monroe appealed so much to men, but not so much to women.

She laughed. "All right, Butterball. But you'll have to wait till Whitey and Peanuts do my face and hair."

Butterball looked at his watch. "I have to get out to the lot." He looked at me. "Would you mind if I left you two alone for a while?"

I said I didn't mind.

Mr. Neill stared at me a moment longer. "I guess it'll be all right," he said finally.

I realized what was going through his mind, and I felt a certain measure of pride. Miss Monroe was a valuable studio property. It wasn't everyone who could be trusted with the hottest thing in Hollywood.

No sooner had the door closed behind Butterball than it opened again and in came a short, middle-aged lady who began to comb out Miss Monroe's hair.

"This is Peanuts," said Miss Monroe. She added, "Everyone on the picture gets a nickname. Mr. Neill is Butterball."

"What's yours?" I asked.

Peanuts laughed. "A.C.—D.C."

Miss Monroe looked at me innocently. "Whatever that means. I thought it was an electrical term."

She picked up a letter from her dresser. "Want to learn

something about me? Here's a letter from a Hollywood astrologer." While she unfolded the letter, she said, "I was born under the sign of Gemini. Sign of the intellectual. I just turned twenty-four, you know, on June first. But I'm definitely not intellectual. Hathaway says, what you do, Marilyn, you do instinctively. It's true. I *sense* things, I don't think them out."

She held up the letter. "Here's what he says. 'You are truly unconventional, non-conforming and independent. An individualist. You like the strange and the curious and the original. Most of the columnists, items and feature story writer's observations about you are such rubbish. So provincially stupid.'"

Miss Monroe lifted her blue eyes from the letter and gave me a little smile.

She continued, "The biggest thing about you—listen to this—is your eyes. Sensitive, searching. Of the beauty and goodness of pain and anxiety. *Duse* had the same kind of melancholy magic in *her* eyes."

Miss Monroe laughed, and put the letter down. "Don't forget—this fellow wants my business!"

Peanuts finished Miss Monroe's hair and Miss Monroe got up and walked toward the bathroom. Across the back of Miss Monroe's white bathrobe, in bold letters, were the words: SHERRY NETHERLAND HOTEL. It was the most effective hotel advertising I've ever seen, because when Miss Monroe walks, she engages your full attention. I gave her my full attention until the bathroom door closed behind her.

Peanuts sighed. "Brother," she said to me, "anybody who knocks that, is just jealous."

Miss Monroe returned and in a few minutes Peanuts took her departure. Once again I was alone with the hottest thing in Hollywood.

There was a knock on the door.

In came a tall, dark, fantastically handsome young man. Miss Monroe introduced him as Richard Allen, who played the part of her lover in "Niagara."

"Funny business—this movie-making," said Mr. Allen, drawing up a chair very close to Miss Monroe.

"How do you mean?" said Miss Monroe.

Mr. Allen drew his chair a little closer. "Well, take this picture. We're supposed to play the part of two people who are passionately in love. And yet we just met for the first time yesterday!"

Miss Monroe nodded.

"What I mean," said Mr. Allen, "well, take that scene at the base of the Falls, for instance. That long passionate kiss scene we have to do. Isn't that just typically Hollywood to thrust two total strangers in front of a camera—and expect them to kiss each other as though they were lovers?"

Mr. Allen leaned forward until he was practically breathing down Miss Monroe's SHERRY NETHERLAND HOTEL bathrobe. He seemed to have forgotten my existence.

He went on, "I mean, Marilyn, wouldn't you feel better about that scene if you knew me better? If we'd run over it once or twice ourselves? Practised that kiss?"

Miss Monroe turned and looked into Mr. Allen's eyes, which were now only a few inches away. Her own blue eyes opened wide and she batted her eyelashes up and down.

"Why, no, Dick," she said. "I don't know what experience you've had with kissing—but I don't need any practice."

There was another knock at the door and Miss Monroe got up to answer it. Mr. Allen remained sitting in his chair, staring at the spot where Miss Monroe had been sitting. He seemed somewhat stunned.

Miss Monroe returned from the door with a husky-looking man, whose muscles bulged out of a white T-shirt.

"This is Whitey," she said, "my make-up man." Laughing, she said, "We call him Whitey, because he wears a white shirt."

Mr. Allen mumbled something about having to be somewhere else, and he departed. Whitey began to arrange bottles of cold cream and powder on Miss Monroe's dresser.

"Whitey's mad at me, aren't you Whitey?" said Miss Monroe. "I cried yesterday, my mascara ran, and he had

to do my eyes all over again."

"There were no tears in the script," said Whitey firmly. "If tears had been called for, I'd have used the waterproof mascara to begin with."

Miss Monroe began to apply a base stick to her face, shoulders and chest. "The secret of a base," she said "is taking most of it off. That's where most women go wrong."

She began to pat herself all over with tissue pads. "See? Now I'm taking most of it off."

Whitey said, "Is it true what you said to Hathaway yesterday about the calendar?"

Miss Monroe laughed. "Yes, it's true. But it wasn't Hathaway."

She explained to me. "They keep asking me if it's true I had nothing on, when I posed for that nude calendar. Yesterday I said, 'Oh, no. I had the radio on.'"

"Who was it asked you?" I said.

"It doesn't matter," said Miss Monroe. "Give it to Hathaway."

"Funny," she went on, "how shocked people in Hollywood were when they learned I'd posed in the nude. Of course, I'd always said no before to photographers when they asked me. But you'll do it if you get hungry enough. It was at a time when I didn't seem to have much future. I'd had several bit parts—which had died in the cutting room. I had no job, or prospects of a job, and I had no money for the rent. I was living at the Hollywood Studio Club for girls. I told them I'd get the rent somehow. So I phoned up Tom Kelly and he took these two color shots, one of me sitting down, one stretched out. I didn't think I'd done anything wrong. His wife Natalie was there. I earned fifty dollars I needed. But people were shocked when they recognized me."

Miss Monroe began to talk about the make-up used by Canadian women and American women. "I don't notice much difference. I think perhaps New York women work harder at being smart than anyone. I think they go too far. They begin to dress for other women. That's wrong—at least I think so. That's why they criticise my clothes. I dress for men."

She said, "I can't understand some women. They complain about it being a man's world. Lots of girls wish they were men. Not me. I don't mind it being a man's world—as long I can be a woman in it."

Miss Monroe gave me a most charming smile. When she smiles, tiny laughter wrinkles appear at the corners of her eyes, giving you the feeling of sharing a funny secret.

I turned over the books on Miss Munroe's bed. One was "Letters To A Young Poet," by Rainer Maria Rilke; the other, "The Thinking Body," by Mabel Elsworth Todd. The idea of Miss Monroe thinking with her body was intriguing.

"That's the dynamics of the human body," said Miss Monroe. "How mental states are reflected in physical states." She stood up, "For instance, when I was learning to relax, I used to jog two miles to the studio every morning. Like this."

She jogged up and down the carpet. "You see, you have to learn to let everything go loose, sort of. See what I mean?"

Whitey left the room to get his make-up kit. Miss Monroe sat down in front of the mirror and began to darken a tiny mole on her left cheek. "I make a beauty mark out of it," she explained, "so it won't look bad when it's photographed. Speaking of relaxing, I went to a Yogi church last week. They teach complete relaxation, but I can't go all the way with their theory. To reach a state of finally desiring nothing. Not now. When I'm old maybe."

We continued to discuss Miss Monroe's body. "You know, when I was a girl, they used to call me String Bean. I used to hate it. I was so tall in the class pictures at school I even had to stand behind the boys."

I remarked that, without her make-up on, Miss Monroe looked like a teen-ager still.

She laughed. "I know. I had my appendix out a month ago and while I was in hospital, the nurses kept popping in, saying, 'Why, she just looks like a kid of sixteen!' I remember one great, big stout nurse came striding in. When she saw me, she growled, 'Hell, what's so menacing about you?'"

"I still am a schoolgirl, I guess. I go to night classes at U.C.L.A. twice a week. I get along all right except for some of the big words the teacher uses. I sit next to this colored boy all the time in class—because he's brilliant. When I don't understand anything, I poke him and he tells me."

Miss Monroe applied eye shadow to the top of her eyelids.

"I was raised as an orphan, you know. In State Hospital in North California. My father was killed in an automobile accident before I was born. At least they say he was killed."

Using a small brush, Miss Monroe began to paint on her lipstick. When she finished, she sat staring out the window at the Falls. She did not say anything for a long time.

Finally, she said, "At school I could never get really interested in mathematics—I used to prefer to use my mind to imagine all sorts of wonderful things. I used to dream I was a princess—that I could select any husband I wanted in the whole world. But instead of just remaining in a princess, I would leave the King and Queen at home, and travel around the world as a poor girl. To find the man I really loved."

She smiled wistfully. "He always turned out to be a poor man."

She was silent. "Again, sometimes I used to imagine that Clark Gable was my father, and that Jeannette MacDonald was my mother. They *loved* me very much. They used to buy me color books and paper dolls and pencil boxes. I had so many I used to give them away to poor girls who didn't have any.

"I used to like the paper dolls especially, because when I was cutting them out and dressing them, I used to make up stories about them. I would talk as the mother doll, then I would drop my voice and talk as the father doll."

Miss Monroe laughed ruefully. "The father doll was always constantly unfaithful, and there would be tragic and mysterious deaths in the family. People would listen to me playing and say, 'Where does she get all this stuff?'"

"Later, I used to write short stories and poetry. I was

better in English. Once, I remember, we had an assignment to write our impressions of Mexico. Instead of just writing my impressions, I wrote this short story. It was about a young Mexican girl, Juanita, who was a lonely little Mexican girl, with no mother or father. When she grew up she married Big Carlos. Afterwards she did all the work in the house, and all the work in the fields, while Big Carlos, he slept. Then came the children, one by one. I wrote it like a children's story, you know, with repetition. It ended up, 'so finally there was Juanita, Carmelita, Rosalita, little Carlos, and Big Carlos—he steel sleeps!'"

"One day, after we turned in our assignments, the teacher said, 'I want to read you all something. And I want you to know I'm amazed this has come from one of my students.'"

"I was dreaming in my seat and not paying much attention to what the teacher was saying. Then suddenly I realized he was reading my story about Juanita, Carmelita, Rosalita, Little Carlos and Big Carlos. Afterwards, he gave me a lot of books, and said I should try to be a writer."

Miss Monroe sat on her chair, her feet curled up under her, for some time. Then she disappeared into the bathroom. When she returned she was wearing checked slacks, and a red, off-the-shoulder blouse, which she was holding together at the back with her hands.

"Would you mind doing me up the back?" she said.

While I was doing up the blouse, Miss Monroe kept talking.

"I used to write poetry, too. Here's one I liked. I'll just tell you the last verse, because the rest is too personal."

She recited:

"O, Time,
Be kind,
Help this weary being,
To forget what is sad to remember.
Loose my loneliness
Ease my mind,
While you eat my flesh."

It was very quiet in the room. Just as I finished buttoning Miss Monroe up, the telephone rang.

She answered, then looked up, "It's New York calling—do you mind?"

I left the room while Miss Monroe talked to New York. In the hall I bumped into Whitey, and we talked about Miss Monroe, while we waited.

"She takes life pretty seriously," said Whitey. "Have you noticed when she's sitting around on the set, waiting to work, that she always has a script in her hands? Well, she's not studying her script, she knows her lines. No, she has one of these Deep Soul books hidden in the script. Rilke, or Franck, or maybe Emerson. She finds something in a book she thinks is true, and writes herself a little note about it. You know, 'you don't save souls in bunches.' Or, 'All life is a road of discovery, leading to yourself.' That sort of thing. She wants to be right *all* the time. They don't have much of a life, you know. Reporters or photographers all the time. If they go out in the street, a crowd gathers for autographs. On location it's a seven o'clock call. I wouldn't want it."

When we went back into Miss Monroe's room, she was skipping around like a little girl. "I'm going to New York for the weekend! If Hathaway will let me!"

She put in a call to Mr. Hathaway. While she waited, she rushed up to the mirror, holding a skirt and suit against her, trying on a little black hat.

She groaned. "I haven't got a thing with me. Just slacks and a skirt. When they said Canada, I thought it would be up in the mountains somewhere. Jean Peters lent me this suit—but it doesn't fit around the hips, does it? Maybe Wardrobe will have something."

The phone rang.

She dumped the clothes on the bed and grabbed the phone. She talked excitedly. She made another call. She talked more, her voice gradually rising. After several calls, she put down the phone and turned to us sadly.

"They're passing the buck. Mr. Hathaway says I can leave if the unit manager says I can. And he says its all right with him, but Hathaway will have to take the responsibility. And neither of them will. Darn them!"

They promised I could go, if they weren't shooting my scenes tomorrow!"

She sat down in front of the mirror and Whitey began to apply makeup to the corners of her eyes. "Whitey—do you think I'm being unreasonable?"

Whitey shook his head.

"Don't say so if you think I am. But I haven't had any time off for the last four pictures."

"I don't think you're unreasonable," said Whitey. "But on the other hand I didn't think they'd let you go, either. If the weather's bad tomorrow, they'll have to shoot indoors. And they'd need you."

Miss Monroe went to the telephone again. "I'll have to put in another call to Joe and tell him they won't let me come."

There was another knock at the door and in came Butterball, the publicity man.

"Honey," he said to Miss Monroe, "we got a real good break. Hy Gardner wants to use you on his coast-to-coast show tonight. Along with Vice-President Barkley. He's going to phone here now, from New York, and tape an interview."

"All right, Butterball," said Miss Monroe. "But you talk to him first and find out what questions he's going to ask me. I don't want him to ask questions about Joe."

"Fine, Honey."

Butterball picked up the phone.

While he was there, Miss Monroe asked me for a cigarette. "I don't smoke," she explained. "But I have to learn to smoke for my next picture. I'm learning tricks with a cigarette. Look—here's my French inhale."

She drew deeply on the cigarette, then opened her mouth. A cloud of smoke slowly curled from her mouth, and disappeared up her nose.

"Here's another. Watch this."

She stuck the cigarette in one side of her mouth and rolled it across to the other side, where she let it dangle dangerously.

She began to show me another trick, but the smoke stuck in her throat and she broke down in a fit of coughing. By the time she recovered Butterball was shouting

at New York through the telephone.

"HELLO, HY? IS THAT YOU, HY? THIS IS BUTTERBALL—I MEAN FRANK NEILL. NEILL! NEILL! I WAS JUST TALKING TO YOU. LOOK, HY, MARILYN WANTS ME TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ASK HER. YOU WANT TO ASK HER ABOUT WHAT? ABOUT JOE? LOOK, HY, THAT'S WHAT SHE DOESN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT. YES.....YES.....YES..... I AGREE WITH YOU HY. YES..... I'M JUST TELLING YOU WHAT SHE SAYS. YES. YES. I'LL ASK HER AGAIN."

Mr. Neill put his hand over the mouthpiece. "Honey, he says this thing between you and Joe is the hottest thing in New York—"

"I don't care, Butterball," said Miss Monroe excitedly. "I don't care! After all, this is my personal life. And I know Joe wouldn't like it. If he wants to mention Joe's name, I won't do it, that's all."

Butterball went back to the phone. "HELLO, HY? LOOK, HY, MARILYN DOESN'T WANT..... YES. YES. DON'T THINK I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT, HY. I AGREE WITH YOU. BUT..... YES. I'LL ASK HER."

He put his hand over the phone again. "Will you talk about baseball?"

"Sure, I'll talk about baseball."

Butterball took his hand off the phone again. "HY? YES, BASEBALL IS OKAY, HY. WHAT? YES..... JUST A MINUTE."

"While you're talking about baseball, can he just ask one question about Joe?"

Miss Monroe shook her head back and forth.

"HY? LOOK, I'M SORRY, HY, BUT MARILYN SAYS NO QUESTIONS ABOUT JOE AT ALL. SHE—"

Miss Monroe appealed to me. "Don't you think I'm right? I don't want to turn my personal life into publicity. I know Joe wouldn't like it. It's not right."

Mr. Neill lifted his head from the phone again. "Can he ask you about Butch?"

Miss Monroe put her hand to her forehead. "No, no, no! Why does he try to drag the child into this? Doesn't

he understand—Joe's wife has already named me in a legal action! It's completely unfair to everybody! My personal relationships are important to me! I don't care if it is a coast to coast show!"

"All right, Honey. All right, Honey," said Butterball soothingly. He spoke into the phone again. "HY? NO. YES, I AGREE WITH YOU, HY. BUT, NO. YES. ALL RIGHT. JUST A MINUTE."

He handed the phone to Miss Monroe. "He wants to talk to you."

Miss Monroe took the phone. She listened nervously, but in silence. "Yes, I do understand." She listened some more. "I would like to help you. But not at the expense of someone else's feelings. No. All right, I'm sorry. Good-by."

She put the phone down slowly. "He's going to skip it. He'll get somebody else."

Butterball wiped his hand over his face and stood up. "It wouldn't have hurt," he said regretfully. "It's a big show."

Miss Monroe began to get very excited. "Frank! This is my personal life! He wanted to ask me about Butch! I think that's terrible! I don't care that much about publicity—"

Butterball held up his hand, trying to stem the flow. "Honey! It's perfectly all right! Don't you worry about it any more! We're only—"

The telephone rang. Butterball picked it up. He handed it to Miss Monroe. "For, you, Honey. New York. No, not Hy. We'll wait outside."

Outside in the hallway we were joined by Whitey and Peanuts. Through the door, we heard Miss Monroe's voice rise.

"But, darling! They won't let me leave! They promised me I could and now they won't let me! Don't you understand? Don't you believe me, darling!" Her voice was distraught.

The conversation ended suddenly.

There was a long wait, from five to ten minutes, before Miss Monroe opened the door and we all trooped back inside. Miss Monroe's eyes were red, and her mascara

had run slightly on her cheeks.

She sat down in front of the mirror and looked at herself. Her voice trembled, but she managed a little grin. "I'm sorry, Whitey, but I guess you'll have to do my eyes over again. Maybe you better use that water-proof mascara all the time."

Nobody said anything.

Chapter 8

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTHUR HAILEY

Dateline: Toronto 1966

The Canadian writer, Arthur Hailey, is well on the way to making a million dollars the hard way—by writing books. His latest novel, *Hotel*, has been on all five major best-seller lists for the past year and has gone into 13 foreign editions. Paperback rights sold for \$159,000. Movie rights sold for \$150,000. Hailey's earnings from this one book will exceed \$500,000.

He is now hard at work on a new novel provisionally titled *The Airport* which may well make him a millionaire. Here's how it's done.

About five years ago, at the dinner table, my wife said, "Guess who's bought the new house down the hill? Arthur Hailey, the writer who did that television play, *Flight Into Danger*."

"That's good," I said. "It'll be interesting to have another writer in the neighborhood."

Well, I was half right. Having the Haileys for neighbors was interesting, all right, but for me personally, it certainly wasn't *good*. In fact, it was damned near a disaster.

The Haileys were friendly enough. Our children played together occasionally. We'd meet Arthur and his attractive wife Sheila on Parents' Night at the neighborhood school and discuss the impossible problem of raising today's children. We were invited to dinners and parties at the Haileys and admired Arthur's collection of clocks and adding machines and paintings. They came to our house and dutifully admired our antiques, including our antique house. One day I helped Arthur put out a fire at his house, which started when one of his children left a pillow sitting on top of a lamp.

It was my wife who caused all the trouble. Every night when I came home she'd have some new bit of neighborhood gossip for me.

"They're making Arthur's play into a novel — and also

a movie."

"Arthur has bought Sheila a new coat. It's a white, full-length sheared beaver."

"The movies have bought Arthur's hospital book. It will be called *The Young Doctors*. Arthur's taking Sheila to Hawaii and Japan."

"Arthur's new novel has been selected by three book clubs. Arthur's letting Sheila have a couple of weeks in New Orleans. *Alone*."

"Arthur's got a new Lincoln Continental. Now Sheila has a car of her own."

What saved our marriage during this trying period was a certain saint-like quality, which many have noted in me. This kept me going until a few weeks ago when my wife finally came up with some *good* news about the Haileys.

She said, "The Haileys are moving to California."

Before making any plans for a celebration I thought I'd better stroll over to the Haileys', and make sure they were really going. Arthur himself answered the door. Behind him, in the hall, I could see packing cases and stacked-up furniture.

"I hear you're moving," I said. "I'd like to interview you about how to write million-dollar books before you go."

"Oh," said Arthur. "All right."

However, he continued to block the doorway. I noticed he was looking down at my shoes.

He said, "Are your shoes wet?"

"I guess they're a little wet on the soles," I said. "But I wiped them on the doormat."

"We've just had the broadloom cleaned," said Arthur. "We're moving out Thursday."

Arthur is a bit of a fusspot sometimes. After I took off my shoes he let me in and I followed him, in my stocking feet, to his book-lined study on the ground floor.

Arthur was a businessman before turning writer and his study reflected his business-like habits. It contained two electric typewriters, a tape recorder, filing cabinets, a photocopying machine and an adding machine. Not a book nor a piece of paper was out of place. There were two telephones beside the desk, one a bright red. Accord-

ing to neighborhood gossip, the red phone was a direct line to his agent in New York.

"Would you like a drink?" asked Arthur.

"Yes," I said. "Scotch and water."

"I'll join you," said Arthur, "although I don't usually drink after dinner. Before dinner I really look forward to a martini, but we rarely have two."

Arthur does not smoke, either. In fact, although he is a good host and a good guest at parties, he is not what you would call a swinger. The last party we'd attended at his place, there'd been a couple of magazine writers and a well-known architect dancing up a storm in Arthur's living room at an hour when Arthur thought everyone should have gone home. He'd gone around emptying ash trays, switching off lights and turning down the stereo until the dancers got discouraged.

Another disconcerting habit of his is disappearing from parties on the dot of 11 o'clock. He always goes for a long walk by himself at 11 o'clock, party or no party. On these walks he wears a pedometer, to see how far he's been.

According to Sheila, when Arthur first began the transition from businessman to writer, he used to check into his study sharp at 9 o'clock, in full business suit. At 10:30 Sheila had to appear with his mid-morning coffee. Not at 10:25, nor at 10:35, but sharp at 10:30.

"Arthur," I said, "it's been said you write with one eye on the book clubs, one eye on the paperbacks and one eye on the movies."

Arthur laughed. "I wish I could. But you can't hit it all the time. In fact, for several weeks after I finished *Hotel*, I was very depressed. Mainly I was worried about the book-club reaction. There are literary snobs who scoff at book clubs, but to a working writer they're very important. Selection by a major book club means immediate attention and prestige. Book-club advertising boosts store sales. And book-club revenue alone can mean financial security while working on the next book."

"Why were you worried about *Hotel*?"

"I knew the book clubs made up their minds quickly. As the weeks dragged on, my hopes dwindled. When the news finally came from New York, it was disastrous. *Hotel*

had been rejected, unequivocally, by *every* major book club. Even more devastating was their opinion: Hotel would not be a successful book. This, after nearly three years' work."

Arthur went on. "I summoned a family conference and explained that things looked very bad. We would all have to find ways of economizing. I would have to go back to writing television scripts."

"You prefer writing books?"

"Oh, yes," said Arthur. "Writing a book, you accept suggestions and criticism, but at least the final decision is yours. Television writing is writing by committee. There are so many people standing around who feel they have to justify their existence by making suggestions. There are rewrites of rewrites. A joke in the trade is that by the fifth rewrite you can start putting your original pages back in. Anyway, after these first bad reports on Hotel, I asked my New York agent, Maeve Southgate, to start lining up some television work again."

"She was slow getting anything for me and to fill in time I roughed out a brief, four-page idea about the book I would like to have written next, if things had turned out differently. Just for the heck of it, I mailed it off to New York, too."

"Suddenly, with a rapidity which still has me dazed, all systems fired at once. First, Doubleday reacted to that rough book outline by offering me a contract with a cash advance that left me breathless. Next day my agent telephoned from New York. Three studios were bidding for Hotel. Next, two book clubs which had originally rejected Hotel reversed themselves. Then a third one came in, which meant we ended up with *three* book clubs instead of none."

Arthur continued. "Then there was the week Hotel first appeared on the best-seller lists. Sheila and I thought, *It'll be nice if it stays there two or three weeks*. Now it's been up there a year." He shook his head.

"What do you think caused it?"

"I don't know," said Arthur. "But anyone who knows anything about writing must admit a great deal of luck is involved. Take my television play, Flight Into Danger,

which made my entire life flip-flop. I was seriously considering giving up writing. I'd had very little success. I hadn't been able to get the newspaper or magazine jobs I wanted. The best I'd managed was to become editor of Bus & Truck Transport, a trade magazine. At 36 years of age, it seemed about time to face up to the fact I was a failure as a creative writer."

"What was so lucky about the television play?"

"To begin with, the idea came to me by accident. I was on a business trip, flying in a North Star—you remember how noisy they were—unable to sleep. I began day-dreaming about what would happen if the crew took sick. Could I—a rusty old R.A.F. pilot—take over and land a multi-engine aircraft?"

"The idea was so intriguing I went home and wrote it in 10 days and mailed it off to the CBC. I'd never written a television play before, never heard of terms like 'dissolve' or 'cut.' I simply wrote it as a three-act play. The next lucky thing was the play got a very good production, both on CBC and in New York. If it hadn't had such a good production, the play may well have gone unnoticed. As it happened, the reaction when it went on the air was instantaneous. Our phone rang for an hour."

"That was my first important sale. They paid me \$750, I think." He went to a filing cabinet and took out a folder. "No, it was \$600. Here's the stub." He put back the folder. "Afterwards it sold to the NBC and the BBC. The movie price was \$21,000. Then I did another play called No Deadly Medicine, which I turned into a novel called The Final Diagnosis. It did very well. About five million copies in 15 languages and it also sold to the movies. Then my play about a nurse was turned into the television series, The Nurses. I had nothing to do with writing the series, but the weekly cheque came in just the same."

"Arthur," I said, "there must be more to all this than just luck."

"Well," said Arthur, "if anything, it's research. My writing is modelled on real facts and real people. It's a truism of fiction that you cannot hew too closely to the truth. Months of research went into Hotel. I'll show you."

He went to his filing cabinets and pulled out several

folders. "These aren't all the files on Hotel—there are more than a dozen—but these are the main ones."

He unfolded a chart or graph, some three feet in length, which showed the structure of Hotel. The action of the novel takes place over a five-day period and each day there are nearly a dozen scenes involving different sets of characters.

"I have to have an outline like this," said Arthur, "when I'm tying together so many different stories. You can't leave any one set of characters too long, or the reader forgets."

"How many words do you write each day?"

"Not many. About two typewritten pages. But that's *finished* copy. My wastebasket will be filled with discarded versions of those two pages. The result is two pages of, well, perhaps finely-chiselled prose is presumptuous—but two pages which will not need revising later on. I may drop whole passages, but I revise very little."

The next folder was filled with dozens of letters between Arthur; Ken McCormick, editor-in-chief of Doubleday; Mrs. Maeve Southgate, Arthur's agent; and Lee Barker, a senior Doubleday editor. For months prior to publication they discussed the plot of the novel, individual scenes, the characters and even such details as the removal of a four-letter word.

"Some suggestions I accept," said Arthur, "others I don't. For instance, in *The Final Diagnosis*, the original opening scene was an autopsy. I've probably watched more autopsies and operations by now than some doctors. This was a strong scene—too strong for the beginning of the book, my publishers felt. I came to agree with them, and shuffled the chapters so the autopsy became chapter three.

"However, in *Hotel* they were against the racial discrimination business involving the Negro dentist. They thought this would kill sales in the South, and might hurt our book-club chances. But I left it in anyway. Later on, I was surprised when I did the movie script. I thought the movie people would want it out, also. But they said, no, let's leave it in there, loud and clear."

The bulkiest files were those devoted to hotel research.

Arthur and Sheila had spent months interviewing hotel managers, engineers, chefs, housemaid and bellboys, in hotels all across North America.

In *Hotel* there is an accident involving an elevator. The material for this came from a Toronto elevator expert. To make sure the detail following the accident was absolutely correct, Sheila had talked to the New Orleans fire department, Police Department and the nearest hospital. There was even a diagram showing the route the ambulance would take from the hotel to the hospital.

Arthur took the bulky files from me. "Here," he said "to save you reading them now, I'll make photostats of some of these for you."

While running the machine, he said: "The one thing everyone asks me about hotels, is whether hotels care if the woman you check in with is your wife. They don't. They are interested in business, not morality. But they do expect you to preserve the appearance, to check in with some decent luggage. Personally, if I wanted to avoid attention I'd make a cash deposit against my bill, soon after checking in. In my research I learned the first thing the credit manager does every morning is check the guests' bills. When he sees you have made a deposit, he stops worrying about you. On the other hand, when he sees you are ordering champagne from room service—for lunch—he's pretty sure you're not entertaining your wife. He doesn't care about this—so long as your credit's good."

"All this travelling around in hotels," I said, "you must have some pretty exciting experiences."

He smiled. "Not really. I thought I would but it doesn't work out that way. For instance, when I went to Hollywood to do the script for *Hotel*, I'd heard all the stories about wild Hollywood parties and I arrived there with great expectations. But my producer met me at the airport and said, 'Now I know you want no part of this Hollywood business, so I've put you into the same hotel my wife's parents stay. It's a nice, quiet hotel.'" Arthur laughed. "It was! Disappointing."

In some literary circles in Toronto, Arthur's writing is considered pretty commercial, if not downright square. On the other hand, he has moved socially with such bon

vivants as Pierre Berton, the television personality; John C. Parkin, the flying architect; Harold Town, the bad boy of Canadian art; and Jack McClelland, the swinging publisher. With some people Arthur and his attractive wife Sheila have achieved a reputation as a very sophisticated couple.

Arthur obtained a divorce from his first wife in the United States, a divorce which is technically not valid here. In a Maclean's magazine article Arthur once recommended "living in sin" for those unable to obtain a divorce because of our antiquated divorce laws. On another occasion Sheila wrote an article for Chatelaine magazine about how to live with a writer. On hearing of this, Andrew Allan, the director, quipped, "Arthur should write a piece—How To Write With a Liver!"

I tried to pursue this subject with Arthur. "I understand you have some pretty unorthodox views on sex. Would you care to comment?"

Arthur laughed. "Any unorthodox views I may have on sex, and mind you, I'm not admitting I have any, I am damned well not spreading around for publication! However, a good marriage should be sufficiently strong that it won't be disturbed by a little sideline sex. If you are really determined to put me on the record, you can say that I write about real things, even though I turn them into fiction. And there are certain human experiences no writer should content himself with writing about vicariously."

"Do you consider your writings as entertainments?"

"No, I prefer the word story teller. I try to tell a story. If, in the course of it, I achieve something more, if there are overtones and I hope there are, then fine. But I think others have to judge."

"Some Toronto literary critics have given you rough reviews. They say your main characters are hospitals, hotels and airports and that you are weak on human beings. Is there any truth in this criticism?"

"It's very easy to be a critic," said Arthur. "You don't have to create anything yourself. But there's certainly some truth in this criticism. I've only been doing this work for 10 years and you learn as you go along. My personal feeling is you'll find the characters much stronger

in Hotel. It's funny I've always had my very worst reviews right here in Toronto. Toronto—perhaps all Canada—tends to denigrate its own people."

Arthur is not hypocritical about his views on Canada and the United States. He's said he considers the idea of a separate Canadian culture ridiculous in the light of geography and present-day communications.

Hugh MacLennan, the Canadian author, analyzed an address Arthur made to the Canadian Authors Association as follows:

"... Arthur Hailey ... stated that Canadian culture does not exist except on a very tenuous regional basis and he then advocated, so far as I can see, that we give up the effort here and join the United States, since evidently hardly any Canadian values their country sufficiently to work for its survival, or can see any purpose in it beyond the making of money."

At a dinner party some years ago, I heard Arthur state the case even more bluntly. Two guests were needling Arthur and accusing him of writing potboilers for the television wasteland, in particular the United States television wasteland. One guest even jumped up and did a burlesque of tasteless television commercials involving headache pills, deodorants and soap.

Arthur, at the time, took it in good part and laughed along with the rest. He said, "I don't care! All I want is fifty thousand a year by the time I'm 50!"

Today Arthur says this incident is absolutely untrue and gives an utterly false impression.

One of us must be wrong.

When Arthur finished photostating his research papers for me, I asked him,

"Why are you leaving Canada?"

He said, "It was a strange thing actually. I was in San Francisco, doing research for the new book. I went to nearby St. Helena to talk to a retired airline captain. He took me to a garden party in Napa Valley. It was a beautiful party, under the walnut trees, the vineyards stretching out in the distance, a blue haze over the mountains and I was charmed by the atmosphere.

"The next day I flew over the valley in a little Cessna,

and was introduced to a developer who showed me some hillside lots. I found one with a beautiful view and said, 'How much?' He told me and I said, 'I'll buy it.'

"The developer swallowed. He said, 'Much as I'd like to sell it, wouldn't you prefer to wait till after lunch?' I said, 'No, I won't know any more after lunch than I know now.' So I sent a telegram to Sheila."

Arthur quotes the entire telegram from memory:

"NAPA VALLEY CALIFORNIA IS A FEW FEET
THIS SIDE OF PARADISE STOP IT IS EVERYTHING
WE HAVE DREAMED ABOUT AND LOVED STOP
YEAR ROUND OUTDOOR LIVING COMBINES
WITH CITY CLOSENESS STOP LOCAL SCHOOLS
EXCELLENT STOP SAN FRANCISCO ONE HOUR
DRIVE STOP TODAY I BOUGHT ONE ACRE LOT
ON GLORIOUS HILLSIDE OVERLOOKING VAL-
LEY AND MOUNTAINS STOP ALEXIS AND PEGGY
KLOTZ EXPECTING YOU SOON TO BEGIN PLAN-
NING OUR FUTURE HOME LOVE."

I asked Arthur, "What does Napa mean?"

"It's an old Indian word," said Arthur, "meaning 'plenty.'"

"Gosh," I said, "it's all just like in a book."

Arthur laughed. "Truth is stranger than fiction."

Chapter 9

AN INTERVIEW WITH A HUMAN CANNONBALL

Dateline: Toronto 1950

The softest job in the world, as far as the hours go, belongs to Hugo Zacchini, the Human Cannonball of the Dailey Brothers Circus. His working day lasts less than one minute.

Clad in a leather flying suit, Zacchini climbs to the muzzle of a 40-foot cannon. There he pauses to make the sign of the cross, then he disappears into the muzzle of the cannon.

Like a good wife, Signora Zacchini tries to keep her husband from going off half-cocked. She calls out:

"Hugol Are you ready?"

From the depths of the cannon, comes Zacchini's muffled reply:

"Yes, I am ready!"

"FORTZAI" cries Signora Zacchini, which is an Italian word meaning "make yourself rigid."

She presses a button. There is a terrific explosion, a flash of flames, and the death-defying Zacchini flies through the air with the greatest of ease. He lands, if his luck holds out, in a large net. Scrambling down, he bows to the applause of thousands of circus fans.

His day's work is done.

Admittedly, it's not a job for a nervous type of individual, but the hours are hard to beat. After watching Zacchini shoot through the air in Kingston, Ont., recently I picked up my camera, pushed up the brim of my fedora and went looking for him in the circus "back yard." I found him sitting beside his cannon, painting a portrait of a circus clown.

"Signor Zacchini," I began, "how does it feel to be shot from a cannon?"

Zacchini recoiled, a look of anguish on his face. "Always the same question!" he said. "One minute a day only I am being a cannonball. Rest of twenty-four hours I am being an artist."

He pointed an accusing paintbrush at me, and I jumped back nervously. "The trouble with reporters," said Zacchini, "is that they do not know anything. Do you know that I am number fifty-one artist in Who Is Who in America? That Time magazine what is an American magazine is sponsor exhibit of my paintings in Washington?"

"Well, no," I admitted with some embarrassment, "I didn't —"

"Do you know that I am a natural polyglot speaking ten languages? That I have a degree also as a chemist, as an architect, as an engineer?"

I shook my head miserably.

"Only reason I am a human cannonball," said Zacchini, "is that in short minutes it pays big dollars. It gives me time to travel and perpetuate my art. Also all mixed together in circus is beauty, color, courage and beautiful girls."

At this moment a young girl in a print dress came out of the big top.

"Barbara!" called Zacchini. To me he said, "I will show you what I mean."

The girl came up to us. "What is it, Poppa?"

Zacchini said, "Barbara, would you mind to take off the clothes so I can show this young man something about art?"

Barbara smiled at me. "Of course, Poppa," she said, and disappeared into the dressing tent beside us.

I became frightened. The bright, sunny afternoon seemed to be turning into a nightmare. I said:

"Now, just a moment, Signor Zacchini, please. I didn't come here to — to — I mean, your daughter doesn't have to — to —"

"Is not my daughter," said Signor Zacchini. "Everyone in circus call me Poppa. I have great respect from young and old because as habits I despise anything what is not pure. For instance in losing time playing cards, drinking or intoxicating myself with smoking."

Hastily I dropped the cigarette I was smoking.

Zacchini resumed his painting of the clown. "The trouble with teachers of art," he said, "is they try always to perpetuate the ancients. No. Art must advance like every-

thing else."

He pointed to his box of paints, which contained about 200 brightly colored bottles.

"I have discover," said Signor Zacchini, "an entirely new medium. A medium what an ordinary artist can make things which the greatest artist of today cannot make. And a medium what a great artist can make things which will be really amazing."

I asked him what this new medium was.

"It is a new kind of paint. I buy the pigment and mix it with my own special liquid. It is like an oil paint but not an oil paint at all."

He held up his clown portrait, which by now was half-finished, and said, "Yes, after twenty years' work, I think I got my medium almost right. Soon the world get wise of my medium and I really believe it will disrupt all others. The whole earth will adopt it."

I listened rather impatiently. I wanted to take a few pictures and get away before Barbara Williams came out of that dressing tent without any clothes. But Zacchini was in a talkative mood.

"With my medium," he said, "you can paint on any articles, board, canvas or stones. And it is as permanent as on best linen paper."

"About your cannon —" I began.

"My medium," said Zacchini, "uses all the resources of modern chemistry to make a painting more colorful, more permanent, and most real. People should use it to paint geniality and beauty, neglecting that extravagance and craziness known as modern art."

"About how many pounds of gunpowder," I asked, "do you use in your cannon?"

"The trouble with modern artists," continued Zacchini, "is they paint craziness. Picasso and his followers are for me impostors what do take advantage of the ignorance of poor humanity. To my own humility, beauty consists of true work, with passion, elaborated and thoughtful, following Mother Nature as close as possible."

Going to the door of the dressing room tent, Signor Zacchini shouted, "Barbara! Are you ready?"

"In a minute, Poppa!"

Zacchini said, "But modern artists, through grand sellership, tell people black is white and white is black. With propaganda they sell anything to the gobblers."

I asked him what a "gobbler" was.

"Gobbler! Gobbler!" He waved his paint brush. "A gobbler is what will swallow anything. I like to perpetrate a strong warning to gobblers. Infallibly modern paintings will be valueless in a few years."

He disappeared into the compartment under his cannon and came out with a sketchbook. Turning the pages quickly he showed me people with two faces, with eyes in the middle of the forehead, and various geometric designs. One painting was called Two Plus Two Equals Twenty-Two.

"Yes," I said, glancing apprehensively toward the dressing tent. "I suppose, Signor Zacchini, that in all the years you —"

"It is the same with modernistic artists. Is no doubt some of them are wizards. They experiment with tonality and color. But a salesman get hold of these experiments and turn this way, turn that way, to see which side is up. Then he put name on it, like Washing Machine Symphony and sell it to a gobbler."

Zacchini shook his head sadly. "The trouble with modern life is the machine think for the man, work for the man. The machine take away man's abilities. There is sickness in the mind, sickness in the body. Soon they will need more doctors than there is people in the population."

Zacchini pointed his paintbrush at me. "And the trouble with doctors," he said, "is they think man is a bicycle. They put a little grease in him here, push him there a little bit. Twenty years ago I tell doctors a man can be sick, but only in the mind. Nothing wrong with his body. They laugh. I am only an artist."

He threw back his head and snorted. "Hal Now today they invent psychosomatic medicine!"

"Yes," I said. "Now, when you're inside the cannon —"

Zacchini looked at me sternly. "Cannon is not important." He dismissed the 40-foot monster beside us with a wave of his paintbrush. "It is only a little thing."

Still frowning at me, he went again to the tent.

"Barbara! Are you ready?"

"In a minute, Poppa!"

Zacchini sat down and in a few minutes he had completed the painting of the circus clown. "I work quickly," he said, "because I have been painting inside my head for a long time. Painting is thinking. It is not making crazy marks with a brush. Idiot can do that."

He indicated various parts of the clown painting. "I teach my students at San Antonio University to paint life as moving. Not like a camera. A camera cannot be an art because it is a machine. An artist he read the inside of a human being before he make a portrait. And this high note of feeling have what a machine cannot have. The machine have to neglect that because it cannot do what a hand can do. And in one thousand years when mechanical art will perfect machine, then the hand of the artist will still be one thousand years ahead."

He pointed at the shadows in the painting. "This is what I call loose line painting. In shadows you see color, not just black. If the shadow contain colors then the painting will move, it will have life. This is my own, almost unknown technique."

He suddenly looked over my shoulder at the tent. "Ah. Here comes Barbara now."

I broke into a cold sweat. I wanted to run, but I was hemmed in by the cannon and the tent. There was no escape.

"Turn around," commanded Zacchini, "and look. Is not one part of Barbara what is not beautiful?"

Taking a deep breath, I turned slowly around. There was nothing else I could do. I let out the breath with a sigh of relief. Barbara was wearing a circus costume, a fringed brassiere and pants.

Zacchini was discussing her body as though she weren't present. "Now, look here," he said. "Where the hip join the body. That is the most beautiful curve of a woman."

He looked sharply at my white face. "What is the matter? Are you not well?"

"I'm all right, now," I said. "What were you saying?"

"That Barbara is an example of why I am with the circus. She is beauty and courage. She is an acrobat. She

rides elephants. She does aerial work without a net. And already she is a mother, but she does not seem to be touched."

Putting on his glasses, Zacchini pointed out other features of Barbara which would be of interest only to a technical mind. Then he told her she could go.

We both stared after her. Zacchini spoke first. "She is such a beauty, yes, yes, yes, oh boy! I would not say extravagant beauty, but a natural beauty. Is not my own opinion only, but of all others with the circus. Even Pete Christiana say so, and his wife is very jealous."

I asked Zacchini if he would pose for some photographs. But after I had taken a few photos, he shook his head, saying:

"The trouble with photographers is they have no imagination."

He bent over and plucked a wild daisy from the ground. "Once I see a picture of Copernicus, the astronomer. He is studying a flower. It is an interesting picture because of the contrast. Such a little flower, such a big brain. Why don't you take my picture like that? It is more like art."

So I took the picture of Zacchini studying the little daisy. I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like.

Chapter 10

A TYPICAL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

Dateline: Tokyo 1951

It was five o'clock, Tokyo time, and there was already a fair number of us in the Correspondents Club when one of the wire-service men arrived with the news: "Art Mason just got a Pulitzer prize."

In the silence following this announcement some of us glanced instinctively at the photographs above the bar. There was the early shot of Mason with his arm thrown patronizingly around Ernie Pyle, and another of him in the doorway of that wrecked B-29 just below Seoul that had served us as press headquarters.

Jim Bendix, an old-time reporter, was the first to speak. "Excuse me," he said, "while I go outside and throw up."

I didn't agree with Bendix' opinion of Art Mason, but I didn't argue. So far as the Mason of ten years ago was concerned, Bendix was right. But he was ignoring that people change. Mason, the man who had just written *Face the Rising Sun*, and Gomenasai, was being acclaimed, and rightly, as a great contributor to our understanding of the East. The Pulitzer committee was only confirming what the public already knew.

It's true Mason doesn't deserve the credit for his change. The credit belongs to a girl named Hiroko-san—and to the Seven Happy Gods.

It happened back in '51, just after the Korean truce talks began. I was going home for a rest, and while I was in the MATS office arranging for transportation I ran into Mason. He'd just been awarded a fellowship at Harvard and was going out on the same plane in the morning.

Mason said, "Look, why don't you come out to my place tonight? We can leave for the airport together."

It didn't take me long to convince myself it was a good suggestion: he lived near the airport. But the real reason I accepted was that Mason's house was rumored to be complete with the most beautiful girl in Japan. I wanted to see for myself.

In the taxi, Mason talked nervously, almost compulsively. "I'll be glad to shake this little island," he said. "I'd no more trust these bowing and smiling Japanese than . . ."

The ride was pretty embarrassing. Our taxi driver, I knew, had to understand English in order to hold his job, but to Mason he didn't even exist.

When we arrived at Mason's house we entered an unusually large room with sliding doors opening onto an inner garden court. In the doorway was a young woman, on her knees and bowing her head to the floor. "Good evening," she said.

As she rose I saw that the rumor was well-founded; she was the most beautiful Japanese I had seen. The bright red colors of her kimono indicated she was just out of her teens.

Mason introduced me to Hiroko-san. For a moment she gave me her polite attention; and then her eyes, and her heart, returned to Mason.

A wrinkled housekeeper appeared with sake, and Hiroko-san filled the tiny porcelain cups. "Your airplane?" she asked Mason with seeming casualness. "It is still for tomorrow morning?"

"I told you before," said Mason. "I'll be leaving here at seven o'clock. Is everything packed?"

"Yes," Hiroko-san said, "it is all finished." Then she looked at me again. "You must be very happy," she said, "to return home after so long a time. I am glad—for both of you. I will drink a toast." We raised our cups. "To your happiness," she said. She took only a small drink and then rose. "Now I will bring you dinner. You will be hungry, no?"

After she rustled from the room, Mason lifted his cup. "Well?" he said, mocking her accent, "beautiful, no?"

"If I were you I'd miss my plane," I said.

He gave a derisive laugh. "Don't be so damn' romantic!" He waved his hand around in an all-inclusive gesture. "This has cost me ten thousand good old American dollars in the past few years. I'm not saying it isn't the best deal I ever made, but don't lose sight of the fact it's

a business deal—for me, *and* for her."

"But her people aren't going to welcome her back with open arms, exactly. Maybe not at all."

Mason poured himself another drink. "Of that ten thousand dollars," he said, "she'll have salted away at least five thousand for herself. I know what it costs to run this place. And with that kind of dowry, she'll be married within a month." He spoke vehemently, like a man arguing with himself, so I didn't pursue the subject.

Hiroko-san returned and set up a low table, on which she cooked sukiyaki. Mason ate without speaking, and Hiroko-san regarded him anxiously. "Is it not good?"

"It's delicious," I said quickly. "It's my misfortune to taste such food when I am about to leave Japan."

She smiled her thanks but her dark eyes immediately returned to Mason's face.

When we had finished eating, we lingered for a while over the wine. Mason was drinking heavily. He seemed to be trying to get drunk.

After several long, awkward silences I said I thought I had better be getting to bed, and Hiroko-san showed me my room. But I could not sleep. Hiroko-san's unhappy face kept coming before my eyes. Finally, I got up and pushed back the sliding doors that opened onto the garden.

I could see Mason sitting on a small stone bench. Hiroko-san stood beside him, one hand outstretched. "Go away!" he said thickly.

"I am sorry," said Hiroko-san. "But I wanted to give you this, to make you think of me sometimes."

She slipped something into his pocket and turned away. As she moved through a patch of moonlight I saw her face. Her cheeks were wet.

* * *

In the morning Mason took hurried leave of Hiroko-san and we drove away in a cab. At the airport he paced up and down, smoking one cigarette after another. Some of his nervousness seemed to leave him once we boarded the plane, but he still didn't want to talk, and so I struck up a conversation with a British trader across the aisle.

While he and I were talking I saw Mason reach into his pocket for cigarettes. Instead of cigarettes he brought out a small white package. "Looks as though I got a going away present," he said.

He tore away the white paper and held up a little string of miniature gods. They were the Seven Happy Gods, mascot gods of the Japanese and a familiar sight in the stalls along the Ginza, fashioned into many kinds of cheap souvenirs. I was a little surprised at Hiroko-san's choice.

Mason dangled the grotesque little gods carelessly. "The five-thousand-dollar present," he said to me with heavy irony. "The Seven Happy Gods in gen-u-wine walrus ivory."

The British trader leaned forward in his seat. "May I see them?" He took the little gods, examining them carefully. "Very nice," he said. "Did I hear you say five thousand?"

Mason laughed. "In a manner of speaking. I—"

The trader nodded. "Then you got a bargain. Haven't seen white jade like that in quite a while."

"Jade?" said Mason. He took the little gods in his hand. His face turned pale and his hand trembled. "I'll have to go back," he said, finally.

He got off the plane at Honolulu, but when he got back to Tokyo, as he told me later, the house was empty and she was gone.

That was three years ago, and since then he has made a fruitless search for her. With the success of his books, of course, he left the newspaper business, and that is why the fellows at the Correspondents Club don't know about the great change that's taken place in Arthur Mason.

But his books tell the story of that change, and perhaps someday Hiroko-san will read one of them and understand and come back to him. Again, perhaps not. The Japanese are a proud people, with an unfortunate attitude toward suicide; they do not consider it an unhonorable way of leaving a life that has become intolerable.

Chapter 11

AN INTERVIEW WITH A TYPICAL ARTIST

Dateline: Toronto 1954

I met Varley on the broad sidewalk in front of Angelo's Tavern, which is a place of considerable charm in summertime in Toronto. Flowers blossom between the squares of pavement, and two large maple trees grow from the middle of the sidewalk to tower over the red-painted brick building. A crazy walk, made of pieces of Italian marble, runs between the flower beds.

Varley, a slight man with a shock of tousled white hair, was wearing a dark shirt and a corduroy sports jacket. He rubbed his toe over the Italian marble in the sidewalk, and then scowled down the street.

"They're going to tear it up," he muttered indignantly, "just to widen the blasted street. Even cut down the maples." He shook his white head in sorrow. "They wouldn't do it in Europe. They'd make the road go *around* the trees."

Such was my introduction to Varley, legendary figure of the Canadian art world.

If any Canadian artist can be said to have achieved "success," it may well be Frederick Horsman Varley. The 73-year-old Varley, an original member of the famous Group of Seven, has been painting Canada and Canadians for nearly half a century. His paintings and drawings hang in the major galleries and collections of the country. His life and work was the subject of a recent National Film Board movie. And currently a retrospective exhibition of his work is touring Canada's larger cities.

While Varley's life has thus been crowned with honors, he has been rewarded with little else. After 50 years of painting it's doubtful if he has a penny more in his pocket than when he began. To paint as he has wanted to paint, he has sacrificed a stable family life, the security of turning his talent to commercially profitable fields—in fact, his whole life.

The world customarily rewards its great artists with

little but recognition — and that too late. It takes a strong personality to work a lifetime in the face of such indifference and, over a bottle of Chianti, I asked Varley to tell me what kind of a man he was. In about 2,000 words.

He laughed. "That's what people ask me in pubs. 'What are you? A musician, an artist, a poet, or what?' I tell them, 'I'm just a man who gets an old-age pension and spends it drinking beer.' Leads to splendid conversations."

Varley sipped his wine. "I'm like my great-grand-uncle, Cornelius Varley. He was known as one of the builders of the Atlantic Cable—an engineer—but he was really a better artist. And I think I get more like him all the time. He spent half his time in debtors' prison. The police were always coming in and saying, 'Sorry, Mr. Varley, but you'll have to come along.' He'd say, 'Just a moment, till I gather up my brushes.' Usually, he'd be out soon enough, except when he got indignant about the other unfortunates. Then he'd stay in, painting pictures furiously until he'd made enough money to get everybody out. What a blasted fool! Just like me."

His eyes twinkling, Varley signalled for another bottle of Chianti. "Let's begin drinking, shall we?"

Varley began talking about another ancestor, John Varley, founder of the Watercolor Society, who'd also achieved fame as an astrologer and fortune-teller. Varley related several incidents in which his ancestor had prophesied death and disaster for various people, which had happened exactly as he had foreseen.

As I wrote this information in my notebook, some skepticism must have appeared on my face.

Varley's eyes crinkled in a smile. "You don't believe it, do you, you Unbeliever!" He laughed. "All right! Just write down 'Poppycock!' But it's all true. In those days a man 'spake in his hearts,' as they say in the Bible. Our spine, our guts, told us what to do. The kind of life we live today, the messages have to go through a part of our body which is just rubbish — our brain. Headache thinking, I call it. Look at the world! For the first time in history, science is in control — and we're helpless."

Varley eyed my notebook. "Are you going to let me check over this interview before you publish it?"

"Of course not," I said.

This answer was apparently unexpected. Varley laughed with delight. "All right," he said. "Fine. I'm tired of all this smugness, anyway."

With seeming irrelevance, he asked, "Were you born in Toronto?"

"Yes," I said.

"Too bad," said Varley. "But you've lived it down fairly well." Looking at my notebook again, he said, "I envy you your business. All you have to carry is a pencil — not load yourself down with paints and brushes and canvases."

Varley, who smoked continuously, lit another cigarette, sipped his wine and began to talk of a voyage he had made many years ago on the Canadian icebreaker *Nascopie*, from which he'd brought back many sketches of the Eskimos and the silent Arctic stretches. Even the memories of the voyage seemed to come back to Varley in sharp, visual images, like individual paintings. Although Eskimo children are the happiest in the world, he remembered the day he heard one cry. And the day a Mountie was astonished at seeing tears in the eyes of an Eskimo woman, whose husband was leaving on a long trip.

"Another picture I'll never forget," said Varley, "was the Bishop. He used to go ashore in a whaleboat at these little Eskimo settlements and baptize the children. This day they'd formed up in two long lines and he was blessing them in pairs. On the way in the Bishop gave his camera to Chips, the ship's carpenter, with instructions to get some pictures of him at work."

Varley jumped up from the table, and there in the middle of Angelo's dining room he gave a pantomime version of the Bishop at work. His white hair helped the illusion.

"There stood the Bishop — an unforgettable picture at the edge of the Arctic — his hands outstretched before him — like this — each resting on the head of an Eskimo child — his face turned upward toward Heaven as he pronounced the holy words — the sunlight streaming down — then, out of the corner of his mouth I heard him mutter — 'Get this, Chips!'"

Varley collapsed, laughing, in his chair and several of

the other diners stared curiously in our direction. We ordered lunch, and another bottle of Chianti. While we ate, I asked Varley if a serious painter, like himself, painted with one eye on posterity.

"Hell, no," said Varley. "A painter paints because he blasted well has to paint. I remember when I was a young man in Antwerp, studying at l'Academie Royale des Beaux-Arts. My father came to try to get me to give up this crazy idea of being an artist. 'How much do you want?' he asked me, and he threw a bundle of money on the table. 'Pick up your money, father,' I said. 'You'll miss your train.' . . . I had to paint."

I asked Varley's opinion of non-objective painters and abstractions.

He spoke impatiently. "They deliberately shut their eyes to the wonder of nature itself. How can you possibly paint a human being as a thing of squares and triangles with eyes in the side of its head? Some of them make pretty patterns — but that's all. That man in the States has carried it to the ultimate — he just puts the canvas on the floor, squeezes paint on it, and tramps around on it with his bare feet."

Varley talked of the period he'd spent in Lynn Valley in British Columbia, and how he'd discovered the cottage where he'd lived and worked.

"That was the happiest time," he said. "I'd been sketching in the hills and I'd seen this little place from above, nestled on the side of the hill, but I'd never been able to find the road to it. Then one day when I was walking someone had cut the weeds along the side of the road, and revealed the hidden path leading to the cottage. It was early morning, with a mist still rising. I walked around the place, peering in the windows. It was deserted. Finally I found a way of climbing up on the verandah, which looked out over the valley. There was a chair sitting there, as though it were waiting for me. I sat down and watched the sun come up over the mountains. I knew I'd found the place I was looking for."

Varley's voice faded away as though he were actually dreaming of the magical moment when he'd discovered

his Lynn Valley home.

"Yes," he said slowly, "those were the golden years. My only companion was a pack rat. A wonderful pet. I didn't know he was sharing my home at first. Then one night I heard a series of small thumps on the stairs. Getting up quietly, I saw the pack rat stealing an apple. He was rolling it down the stairs, one step at a time, so it wouldn't get away from him. Of course, he was too timid to be friends at first. I discovered where he was living — in the back of the piano. Later he came to the table when I was eating some bread and cheese, and I gave him some. Afterwards I walked out on the verandah to watch some beautiful cumulus clouds forming over the hills. As I leaned over the railing, the pack rat followed me outside, climbed the railing and ran back and forth over my arms. We were friends."

"Have you ever lived alone in the country?" asked Varley. "No? Well, it's not like the silence of the Arctic. There is always music, and voices. Higher up the valley the river ran over a fall of rocks with a tinkling sound, like the staccato notes of violins. In winter there was the constant growl and rumble of the ice pack. Farther down the valley there were a number of caves which echoed to the rush of the water. Reminded me always of da Vinci. When he was painting Mona Lisa, he used to tell her strange and fanciful tales of caves beneath the sea." Varley paused. "Then there was the sound of the pine trees, those tremendous pines always rustling in the wind, like a giant orchestra."

Listening to Varley's voice, I almost imagined I could hear the music he was hearing. I was moved to say, "You should have been a writer."

Varley looked at me strangely. "It's funny you should say that. When I came over from England as a young man, I had a novel almost completed. Done on scraps of paper and in bits of time. When my wife joined me in Canada I asked her where it was. She'd thrown it away. Thought it was junk."

Varley fell silent. "Maybe she was right," he said, smiling. "Another time I wrote a story. Before Life became a picture magazine, it was a humor magazine, and the

famous Robert Benchley was an editor. They ran a contest for short stories of 3,000 words. I sent in a simple little story about people talking in a hammock on a summer afternoon.

"I didn't win a prize — but I got something I prized even more. A personal note from Robert Benchley himself. He wrote, 'Because ours is a magazine of humor, we cannot use a serious short story like yours. But I would like very much to see anything else you write.'"

Varley stared into his glass. "Yes," he said slowly, and without merriment, "a writer is what I've always wanted to be."

After a few moments he looked up, his face brightening. "Well," he said briskly, "let's have another Chianti, shall we?"

Chapter 12

THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Dateline: Toronto 1965

There was a squeal of brakes up ahead of me and the truck I was following swung suddenly into the curb. The driver jumped out of his cab and ran across the street toward a small group of people.

I brought my car to a stop beside the truck and looked across the street to see what was the matter. A child lay on the pavement in a horrible position. Her legs were doubled under her. Her body was twisted. Her hair was splashed on the pavement. Several people stood at a short distance as though not wanting to come too close.

Behind this scene was a row of small, red-brick houses, close to the sidewalk. The houses were old, but neat in appearance. I saw a plump, motherly woman come running from one of these houses, apparently summoned by some small children who trailed behind her.

She ran toward the child lying on the pavement. She was screaming:

"Mary? Not Mary! Not my Mary!"

She fell to her knees on the pavement, her hands outstretched over the child. I put my car in gear and drove slowly away. I had not been a witness to the accident and there was nothing I could do to help.

The next day I looked in the newspaper for a report of the accident. It was a small story, in the back of the paper, which summed things up neatly:

Girl, 9, Killed On Way To Birthday Party

There was a blurred snapshot of the child, whose name was Mary Grant. She had been hurrying home from school for her 11-year-old brother's birthday party. The driver of the car had been arrested and charged with criminal negligence causing death. A few weeks later another brief newspaper story reported he had been con-

victed and sentenced to 18 months in jail. It was the kind of accident happening every day somewhere in Canada and normally I would have soon forgotten about it.

However, as the months passed, I could still hear that mother's cry ringing in my mind:

"Mary? Not Mary! Not my Mary!"

I made up my mind that sometime in the future I would go back and talk to that mother about the death of her child.

DURING 1962, 111,115 persons were injured in automobile accidents in Canada. A total of 2,883 persons were killed. Of these, 519 were children.

One of these children was a young girl named Mary Grant.

She was struck down by an automobile on a warm, sunny afternoon, as she was crossing the street in front of her home. By chance, Weekend Magazine Staff Writer Jock Carroll drove past the accident scene a few moments after it happened. Now, three years later, he returns to talk to some of the people involved and to write about what happens when a child dies.

Three years passed before I returned to the scene of the accident. I was startled to find the scene, still vivid in my mind, had completely disappeared. The whole block of little red-brick houses had been demolished to make way for a building project. I knocked at the door of a house in the next block.

The woman who answered said, "Oh, of course. I remember the family. They stayed for a while after the accident, then they moved away. Why do you want to find them?"

I said I wanted to write a story about the accident. "Why?" she said. "Why drag all that unhappiness up again?"

I said I hoped the story might make the streets safer for other children.

"No," she said. "It won't do any good."

"Perhaps you're right," I said, "but I'd like to talk to them anyway. Do you remember the policeman at the

accident?"

"They came from No. 4 Station," she said. "They were here right after it happened."

The investigating officer, I found out, had been Const. Bruce Hardcastle of the Accident Squad. To him the death of Mary Grant was a number. Fatal Accident No. 48, 1962. He read to me the report he'd made at the time.

"On Tuesday, June 26th, 1962, at about 4:02 P.M., I received a radio call to proceed to Parliament street, just south of Queen street, where a personal injury accident had occurred. I arrived at the scene at about 4:11 P.M. and found that an accident had taken place between a 1957 Chevrolet coach, turquoise and white, licence number 356-275, and a small girl pedestrian."

Hardcastle continued, "At approximately 4:30 P.M. I started to ask the driver of the vehicle questions pertaining to the accident. It was at this time that I noted a strong smell of alcohol coming from his breath. His eyes were bloodshot and watery. Upon asking this man to step from his vehicle, he staggered up against the left side of his vehicle to keep his balance. I asked the accused to walk in a southerly direction to where the accident cruiser was parked and to get in. As the man did this, I observed him to veer off to the left as he walked toward the cruiser and when he reached the police car, he had to support himself along the right side before getting in.

"At approximately 4:35 P.M.," continued Hardcastle, "I made the following measurements and observations. Parliament street at this point is 48 feet wide. Point of impact was established by dirt and blood on the roadway, at 10 feet west of the east curb of Parliament street and 139 feet north of the north curb line of Duchess street. No visible skid marks up to the point of impact or after. Weather clear and sunny. Pavement dry. No parked vehicle at either side of Parliament street in vicinity of accident. No southbound traffic at time of accident."

I interrupted Hardcastle. "What are all the things you do at an accident?"

"There's quite a list. First, you find out who's involved and if medical aid is required. In this case an ambulance was already on the scene. After I called another squad

car, I put the driver in the cruiser. Then I took the names of witnesses and rough notes of what they'd seen and their names and addresses. Then I called for a police photographer and asked our Breathalyzer man, Const. James Plumley, to go to No. 4 Station, where I took the driver of the car. After Plumley made his Breathalyzer tests, I asked, 'What did he blow?'

"Plumley said, 'He blew 2.9 the first test and 3.0 the second test.' That's three parts of alcohol per thousand parts of blood. At 1.5 parts alcohol the courts generally consider a man impaired. At this point I locked up the driver, consulted the Attorney-General's Department and charged him with drunken driving and criminal negligence causing death."

"Are you finished then?"

"I am sorry," said the doctor, "I just couldn't do anything"

"Oh, no," said Hardcastle. "Next I had to make out a Sudden Death Report. Check the operating condition of the car. Notify the accused's wife of his whereabouts. That was unpleasant. He had eight children of his own. Unemployed. His wife broke down. Later that evening I had to take the child's father to the morgue to make positive identification of the body. That's a tough job, but we have to do it."

I said, "It must be depressing work."

"It can be," said Hardcastle. "When you have several cases going at once and you get a little overworked it can affect your own home life."

"What did the accused say at the time of the accident?"

"Not much. However, he had a passenger in the front seat with him, who was just as drunk. There was a bad moment when I said to the passenger, 'Do you realize you've killed a child?' He said, 'So what—I wasn't driving.' I came pretty close to hitting him then."

"Was the driver insured?" I asked.

"Yes," said Hardcastle. "He had insurance."

I said, "Well, that's one consolation. Under the circumstances I imagine the parents received a large settlement."

"I wouldn't know about that. The police are concerned only with the criminal action, not the civil action. You'd have to talk to their lawyer about that."

The lawyer who had acted for the parents was a dark-haired, blue-eyed young man named Donald Creighton whose specialty was civil litigation. Over a cup of coffee in his office, he talked about the Grant case.

"First," said Creighton, "you must understand the basis of a suit by survivors lies in Lord Campbell's Act, which was enacted in England and subsequently in Ontario in 1847. The only claim which can be made is for financial loss. Our law provides nothing for the grief or sorrow of bereaved parents."

"If you kill a rising young executive, who is earning a high salary and who has a wife and family, you are in trouble. In a recent judgment of our Court of Appeal, \$180,000 was awarded for loss of a breadwinner. A wife and children have obviously suffered a great financial loss—a man's potential income over perhaps 10 or 20 years. But a child? Have the parents suffered financial loss in the death of a nine-year-old child? Not in law. The cruel, hard fact of the matter is that the child's death is going to save them money."

"What did Mary's parents receive?"

"We settled with the insurance company for \$1,000, plus an added \$300 for funeral expenses. This \$300 is the maximum allowed under the Fatal Accidents Act. A rule of thumb has emerged from court decisions in the death of children. One hundred dollars for each year of a child's life. Mary was nine years old. They stretched a point."

"One thousand dollars doesn't seem much," I said, "to compensate for the loss of a child."

"These are the most painful cases I get," said Creighton. "After the grief of the funeral, I am faced with explaining to the parents that their child, in the eyes of the law, is worth only a few hundred dollars. And it is no use suing for more. I try to explain it to them, but they just do not understand. I can't say I blame them. I have two young children of my own."

Creighton sipped his coffee. "There is a situation where parents can recover substantial sums. If a child is crip-

pled and faces long, expensive medical treatment for the rest of its life—for which the parents must pay—then amounts over \$100,000 have been successfully claimed.”

“So a crippled child can be worth \$100,000 but a dead child is worth only \$1,000?”

“Yes,” said Creighton. “There’s an expression so horrible I can hardly repeat it. The expression is, ‘If you’re going to hit a child, *kill him.*’”

I phoned Mary’s parents at their new address. Her mother answered.

“Yes,” she said, “I think I can talk about it now.”

The following afternoon I went to the house the Grants now lived in. Mrs. Grant greeted me in a small, neat living room. Her husband, who worked nights as a security policeman, was asleep in another room on the same floor.

A mounted snapshot of the dead child stood on a nearby table.

“Her name was Mary,” said Mrs. Grant, “but we always called her Little Mary, because my sister’s name was Mary, too.”

I asked her to tell me about the day of the accident. “It was her brother’s birthday,” said Mrs. Grant. “We had it all planned. A soccer ball for him, and a soccer sweater. I’d baked his cake, white cake with chocolate icing, with 11 rosebuds on it. At noon, Mary said, ‘Mum, can I stay home from school and have a dime to buy Raymond’s present?’

“Her father was working nights and he was home. ‘No,’ he said, ‘you go to school.’

“She didn’t argue. She helped me with the lunch dishes and she was standing on a chair when she kissed me goodbye. She said, ‘I love you, Mummy.’ They were the last words I ever heard her say.

“We had invited 12 kiddies to the party and four of them arrived before Raymond came home from school. You know, he and Mary were like two peas in a pod. If Raymond got chicken pox, Mary got it. The same with scarlet fever and the measles.

“Mary was lying there. She wasn’t conscious but her body was trembling...”

“Anyway, after school Raymond came home and said, ‘Where’s Mary?’

“‘She’ll be here any minute.’ I said and we began arranging his presents on the table. It was right then I heard this terrible thump outside on the street. It was so loud, I thought two cars had hit each other. Raymond and the kids ran outside to see what it was.

“In a moment Raymond came running back in. ‘Mum!’ he shouted. ‘Come and help Mary! She’s bleeding terrible!’

“I ran outside and Mary was lying there. She wasn’t conscious but her body was trembling. I didn’t know what to do, so I went back inside the house and got a blanket to put over her, to keep her warm.

“The driver of the car had stopped and backed up. He was just sitting in it. A policeman made him get out of the car and he was so drunk he just leaned against the side of the car.

“The policeman said, ‘You’re lucky it’s not my child.’

“In a few minutes an ambulance came and took us to the Sick Children’s Hospital, although I knew it wasn’t any use. For a while, sitting in the waiting room, I was afraid I would pass out, because I have a heart condition. A nurse gave me some pills and some coffee.

“The police had gotten hold of my husband at the plant and he arrived at the hospital.

“I said, ‘Mary’s dead.’

“‘No,’ he said, ‘Mary’s come through a lot. She’s strong. She’ll come through it.’

“‘But in a while the doctor came out. ‘I’m sorry,’ he said, ‘but I just couldn’t do anything for her. She was dead on arrival.’

“‘We went home and my husband was very upset. ‘Sit down,’ I said, ‘and I’ll make you a cup of tea.’

“Our son, Raymond, said, ‘Where’s Mary? Did you leave her in the hospital?’

“I said, ‘She’s dead, Raymond.’

“Raymond looked at the birthday table. He said, ‘This is the worst birthday present I could get. Take these things and give them to the kids on the street.’

“Raymond never cried about it. He sat around for a

while that evening and then he went out and took a ride on the subway. He had his picture taken in one of those machines. It was an awful picture. I never want to see him look like that again.

"We had a visitor that evening. It was an adjuster from the insurance company, wanting us to make a settlement.

"My husband could hardly speak. 'Get out!' he said. 'Get out!'

"The funeral was Friday. A blind man I'd never met before came to the funeral. He said he used to go downtown every Thursday and Little Mary would take him to the street car and meet him again when he came back at 4 o'clock. She did a lot of things like that. I'm a Protestant, but my husband is a Catholic, so the children were brought up Catholic. After Mary went to Mass Sunday morning, she used to round up some of the small kids on the street and take them down to the Anglican Sunday school. After the funeral we packed all her things in boxes and phoned for the Anglican Church to take them away."

I asked Mrs. Grant if it had bothered her, living in the same house after the accident.

"Not at first," she said. "But in the spring, when the snow melted, I was walking down the street one day and I could see her lying there, as plain as the day of the accident. I said to my husband, 'We're going to move.' The very next day, the fifth of March, I found this other house and we moved the same day."

There was the sound of somebody moving in the next room. Mrs. Grant said, "That'll be my husband getting up now. I'll make a cup of tea and you can have a talk with him."

Mr. Grant came in and shook hands. He was a big man, a rugged man who'd once worked in the mines in Sydney and Timmins.

"Well," he said, somewhat abruptly, "what do you want to know?"

I asked him to tell me just what happened on the day of the accident. He began to talk, slowly, but he did not look at me as he talked.

"I was working for Pinkerton's at the time, down at the

St. Lawrence Sugar plant on Queen's Quay. They phoned me there'd been an accident. But you just can't leave, you know. The sergeant said he'd get down as soon as he could to let me go to the hospital."

Mr. Grant's voice trailed off. After a while he resumed. "After the sergeant came I went out the front gate. There were no taxis down there. I stopped a car and told this stranger my daughter had been hit by a car. I was pretty upset."

Mary's father pushed his glasses up on his forehead and rubbed his eyes with his fingers.

He said, apologetically, "I've had a bad week, you know. Twelve hours a day. We're shorthanded and it's three weeks since I had a day off. About Mary, that day at lunch, she asked me for a dime. Maybe if I had given her the dime, it wouldn't have happened. You don't know, do you? The lady at the corner store liked Mary. She always said, 'Mary, when you're 15 you can have a job working here after school.'"

"When Mary was killed, this same lady put a glass jar on the counter for her and took up a collection. People put their change in it. After a week or so, they brought the jar over to our house and emptied it on the table in front of me. There was change running all over the table. Hundreds of dimes in it."

Mr. Grant pressed his fingers into the corners of his eyes. After a pause, he said, "I guess I'll never refuse a child a dime again... Then there was the hospital... but my wife told you about that... Then there was the morgue..."

After a long pause, Mr. Grant said, "Is there anything else you want me to tell you?"

I had finally realized why Mr. Grant was rubbing his eyes, and why he was finding it so difficult to speak. He was on the point of breaking down.

"No," I said. "That's all I want to know, thank you."

His wife came back into the room. She said, "I think our son Raymond was the one who was most upset. We sent him to camp that summer, but he ran away three times. He'd never done anything like that before. And next year in school he failed for the first time. Now, he's

doing better again.

"When we first moved here, there was a little Italian boy next door who kept running on the road. Raymond used to shout at him, 'Get off the street, or you'll get hit!' One day he grabbed the little boy and shook him, shouting, 'I'll give you a real beating if you don't stop running on the street!'

"He hasn't had a birthday party since then. After we moved here I tried to have a birthday party for him, but when he saw the other kids here, he walked right out. When he came back later I said, 'Raymond, you can't do that to your friends.'

"He said, 'I didn't want a birthday party, I told you.'

"He hasn't gone to church since then, either. He said to me one day, 'There is no God. If there was a God, He wouldn't let this happen.' I tried to tell him, we had Little Mary for nine years and we had a great deal of happiness in that time.

"Raymond just says, 'We haven't got her now.'"

Mrs. Grant looked at the clock on the wall. "Raymond will be home from school soon. Do you want to talk to him too?"

I put my notebook in my pocket and rose to leave. "No," I said, "I don't think I want to talk to Raymond."

Chapter 13

A TYPICAL NEWSPAPER CARTOONIST

Dateline: Toronto 1970

It was Duncan Macpherson, himself, on the phone. He said, "I'm bringing out a new book of cartoons. Would you write an introduction?" He added, quickly, "For money, of course."

"I'd be glad to do it for nothing," I said.

"No! No!" said Macpherson, panic in his voice. "This is strictly a *business* arrangement. I've got \$250. in the book budget for an introduction. Just write 250 words. That's a dollar a word." He added, somewhat uncertainly, "That is a dollar a word, isn't it?"

I worked it out on the back of an old envelope. "Yes," I said, "that's a dollar a word, all right. Now, what kind of an introduction would you like?"

"Well," said Macpherson, "I work for the Toronto Star . . . you could mention that . . . it's my 8th book of cartoons . . . perhaps . . ."

His voice trailed off. Macpherson blushes when he talks about his work. Now he got mad at me for bringing the subject up.

"How can a person talk about himself?" he demanded.

"All right," I said soothingly. "Suppose I just write about your achievements. All the National Newspaper Awards you've won, your books, appearances in *Time* Magazine, what Edmund Wilson said about you, your—"

"No," said Macpherson. "I don't like that kind of puff puff."

I tried again. "Suppose, then, I concentrate on you as a human being. I'll talk to your mother, your wife, Dorothy—"

"No, no," said Macpherson. "I don't like my private life being dragged into it."

I was getting it now. Macpherson wanted an introduction which said nothing about his private life and nothing about his work. A typical Macpherson idea.

I tried another approach. "Suppose I just do a rough draft," I said. "Then we'll go over it together."

This suggestion horrified Macpherson, the artist, most of all. "No, no, no," he said. "You're a professional. I'm not going to be trapped into editing this junk. It will appear just as you write it."

"Fine," I said. "But isn't 250 words a bit short?"

Macpherson said, "I was planning an introduction about the size of a postcard. You could maybe go over a bit on the next page. But don't make a big thing of it."

"Right," I said. "I'll get right on with it."

DUNCAN MACPHERSON, THE HUMAN BEING

Pinning down Macpherson in 250 words would be like capturing an elephant with a butterfly net. When I first met him I might have tried it. You would just write that Macpherson is kind, cruel, gentle, rough, charming, terrifying, shy, boisterous, puritanical, hedonistic, generous, canny, chivalrous, crude, gay, sombre and so on until you reached 250 words. It would be accurate, but not very helpful.

In the 20 years I've known Macpherson, I've made up dozens of theories about him, and discarded all of them.

It's said he baffles his friends. By that definition I'm one of Macpherson's friends. There are other scraps of evidence. Like many of his friends, I own some original Macpherson drawings. Many of them he gave to me simply because I said I liked them. This may be friendship. Although he once took his car into a garage and gave it to a mechanic he'd never seen before. He's never given me one of his cars.

Another favourable sign is that Macpherson did not push me through the plate glass window of the Dorothy Cameron Art Gallery on Yonge Street, once. We'd been invited to leave the art gallery where it was alleged we were creating a disturbance.

We were simply having a discussion about the role of the artist in society and we continued the discussion outside on the sidewalk. He had me in a wrestling hold and I was trying to choke him to his senses.

We staggered back across the sidewalk and bumped into the window of the art gallery.

"I could put you right through that window," panted Macpherson.

He did not put me through the window. Instead, he took me to his house and cooked me bacon and eggs. That's friendship, I think. If Macpherson had been holding a total stranger, or even a casual acquaintance, I think he would have put him through the window.

Five years ago Macpherson had an exhibition of his work at the Art Gallery of Toronto. He was interviewed by a lady writer of the period who wrote, delicately, "An evening with Macpherson is an uncertain thing."

This is accurate. Especially if you regard an evening in the eye of a hurricane as an uncertain thing. Macpherson barges in and out of your life. Occasionally, a friend who does not quite feel up to a hurricane will put out the lights and pretend to be asleep when he comes calling. This does no good. Macpherson may kick in the door, particularly if he has come to deliver a bouquet of roses.

A really gala Macpherson evening begins to form on the horizon when he has just finished a bout of hard work. Now, it's Saturday night in Glasgie.

He may invite the first people he encounters to a champagne supper, probably at the steak house of his friend, Harry Barberian. On arrival he will jovially insult the maitre de, the waiter, the barman and, with a little bit of luck, Harry Barberian.

If there is a visiting personage, such as the Russian Ambassador, Macpherson will find him immediately and insist on demonstrating his skill as a magician.

He firmly believes he can whip off a restaurant tablecloth without disturbing bowls of soup, bottles of wine, plates of food, cutlery, or anything else on the table. He can't. The only element of magic is the disappearance of entire dinners.

While Harry Barberian is trying to explain things to the ambassador and his security men, Macpherson may interrupt with his patented vaudeville act, a kind of song and dance routine called "Pony Boy." Try to visualize a black, grinning Russian bear in a straw hat. It is jumping up and down, kicking its heels, or rear paws, together.

The words of the song seem to be coming from a Hidden Victrola. (See Footnote #1).

Macpherson also diverts attention from himself by drawing caricatures of those present on scraps of paper, on the tablecloth, on the thighs of lady patrons, or on the walls. I once watched a bald-headed man depart with an original Macpherson portrait of himself, drawn right on top of his bald head. The face on top of his head was a perfect likeness of the face beneath and it was unnerving. He drove off in a 1935 Type 57 Bugatti Ventoux Coupe. I often wonder what happened when he got home.

Just as the main course is arriving, Macpherson may abruptly stand up, announce he is leaving and leave. Sometimes he just disappears, as though he really is a magician. It always turns out he's paid the bill.

If this makes Macpherson sound like the playboy of the western world, it is not the whole picture. Much, if not most of the time, he leads a comparatively calm life. Quiet dinners. An evening playing darts or snooker—he's even taken up chess lately. He likes cruising around in his boat, or a quiet weekend of duck-hunting on Lake Erie or Lake Simcoe.

While I've been drawn into a few hurricanes, I've also been dragged out on many pleasant little excursions. He may take a notion to explore the ruins of the Tom Thomson shack, behind the Studio Building, before it's dismantled. He may arrange for Sunday breakfast at the home of sportswriter Ted Reeve, or an evening of conversation with novelist Morley Callaghan, while he makes notes for drawings of them.

There's one theory that he's simply a hard-working, hairy-legged, whuskey-sipping Highlander. Both his parents came from the Hebrides and the original of one branch of the Clan Macpherson was known as Duncan The Parson. Macpherson's drawing board certainly functions as a pulpit.

Macpherson, perversely, makes little of his Highland background.

"I think they began making up their own history," he says, "just to get even with the English. They claim they're

Celts—I think they were probably Scandinavian originally."

Perversity, of course, is a Celtic trait.

At times Macpherson does appear to be at war with the world. His years in the R.C.A.F. were a kind of war within a war, both in Canada and in Britain.

He says it's not a deliberate attitude, it's the way he was born.

He says, "It's been helped along by my life in the air force and man's inhumanity to man. I don't go along with charlatans and people who love themselves. It not only makes me nervous, it makes me mad."

Perhaps it's simply because he's an artist.

Artists, generally, are more sensitive than others and have to fight harder to survive. Macpherson has survived by magazine illustration, cartoons for church publications, inking in buttonholes and Harris tweed for Eaton catalogues, even by painting Angus Doughnut booths at the Canadian National Exhibition.

For much of his professional life Macpherson has been a free-lance artist, a particularly excruciating way to make a living. One keeps meeting publishers who are interested only in money, editors who cannot read or write, art directors who know little about art, and their sisters and their cousins and their aunts.

Macpherson does not suffer fools gladly. He ended one art conference on the 10th floor of a Toronto hotel by simply picking up his drawings and hurling them, one by one, out the hotel window.

One theory about a sense of humour is that very sensitive people develop it in order to bear the grim realities of life. Macpherson has a Gargantuan sense of humour. Maybe he's sensitive.

Oh, I nearly forgot about the boats. Macpherson is crazy about boats. He is always buying them, selling them and getting on them. He draws and paints boats with great feeling. In his penthouse studio in the Star Building there is a magnificent scale model of the famous Canadian schooner *Bluenose*.

Last year Macpherson brought out a magnificent volume of drawings and paintings called *Macpherson's Can-*

ada. To produce this he spent four summers drawing the people of Canada. It is a portrait of Canada.

Looking through the book recently, I began counting the boats. I got to 53 before I lost count. There are drawings of scows, punts, freighters, tugs, fishing boats, hydrofoils, sailboats, rowboats, naval vessels, ore carriers, herring boats, schooners, oil tankers, pulpwood carriers, cruisers, outboards, kayaks, car ferries, pilot boats, stern wheelers, freight canoes and lifeboats.

There are sketches of flying boats, boathouses, marine railways, drydocks, marinas, wheelhouses, engine rooms, ship designers and ship hulls and ship blueprints.

There is even a drawing of a little boy peering in a store window at a model boat.

I don't know what meaning all this has, if any.

No, I have never heard of an artist named Paul Gauguin.

MACPHERSON'S WORK

Macpherson is an accomplished artist in many fields. But he is famous for the political cartoons which appear in the *Toronto Star*. This book is the 8th collection of his cartoons to be published. It is a selection from those which have appeared during the past 3 years.

Knowledgeable people in the newspaper and magazine fields hold varying shades of opinion about his work. Some say he is a genius. Others say he is the best political caricaturist Canada has produced. Others say he ranks with the top six cartoonists in the world today.

Beland Honderich, President and Publisher of the *Toronto Star*, has said said unequivocally, "Macpherson is the *best* political cartoonist in the world today."

Many agree with him, including publishers who have tried to lure Macpherson to England and the United States. He has fans at all levels. Some simply tear his cartoons out of the paper and tack them to the kitchen wall. Others have them expensively framed and hang them in their executive suites and boardrooms.

Among the most avid collectors are the politicians he lampoons. During his time in Ottawa the *Star's* Peter

Newman came to recognize a recurring sequence of events whenever Macpherson sank a harpoon into a prominent politician.

"The subject of Macpherson's drawings would fume and snub *The Star* as ostentatiously as possible. But a day or two later his executive assistant would telephone me at home and ask if I could arrange for 'the minister' to get a copy of 'that dreadful cartoon.'"

Macpherson was born on September 20th, 1924. He attended North Toronto Collegiate and Danforth Technical School. Following his war with the R.C.A.F., he studied in London, England, at the Boston Museum and at the Ontario College of Art.

In 1947 the humourist, Greg Clark, left the *Star Weekly* to go with *The Standard* of Montreal, another national newspaper. With Clark went Jim Frise, his artist-collaborator of many years. Frise died shortly after the change and a search was begun for an artist to team up with Greg Clark.

The Art Director of *The Standard* was Dick Hersey, one of the first to seek out Canadian talent and encourage its use in magazine illustration. Hersey had glimpsed Macpherson's work in a serviceman's art show in Ottawa, cartoons done on Salvation Army notepaper. He tracked Macpherson down in Boston and persuaded this unknown artist to do some sample illustrations for the Greg Clark stories.

A number of artists were trying to fit into the shoes vacated by the late Jimmie Frise. But Macpherson's samples were so boldly original, so stamped with talent, that he was the delighted choice of Hersey and Clark.

Greg's former partner, Jim Frise, had been a gentle, humorous soul, and the creator of the famous *Birdseye Center* cartoon panel of the *Star Weekly*. In a way, Greg's new marriage with Macpherson was a strange one. Greg's stories were sugar-coated. Macpherson's pen was dipped in acid. But it was the stepping-stone Macpherson needed. Some weeks, in Boston, he'd lived exclusively on spaghetti.

His next major series was for *Maclean's Magazine*, where he illustrated the humour pieces of Robert Thomas

Allen. His instinct for caricature went to work and his impression of Bob Allen gradually became the shabby, barefoot creature, Everyman, which appears in his cartoons today.

Macpherson found his real calling when Pierre Berton brought him to *The Star* in 1958. He was almost instantly successful and, except for a very brief period of disenchantment with daily routine, he has been there ever since. It is Canada's good fortune that, at *The Star*, Macpherson found, or forged, an atmosphere that allowed him to develop fully his gift for fun, satire and caricature.

He has studied the history of the editorial cartoon and feels it reached its peak in 18th century England, in the work of such cartoonists as Gillray, Hogarth and Rowlandson. After that, he says, the cartoon degenerated into a propaganda poster expressing the view of the publisher.

"In many North American newspapers," says Macpherson, "the cartoon is simply an illustration of the lead editorial."

Macpherson's freedom at *The Star* is unique, although there are hopeful signs his success is changing attitudes on other newspapers.

The Star's publisher, Honderich, says, "We keep Duncan here because we give him freedom he could get in few other places."

Macpherson is free to attend *Star* editorial meetings but rarely does so. He consults the editors, but the atmosphere is apparently one of mutual respect.

"I get my own ideas," says Macpherson. "The true political cartoonist must do something which amuses or angers *him*."

The impact of a Macpherson on society is hard to measure. Despite his fame, it may be he is still generally underestimated.

A picture is not, always, worth ten thousand words. His great cartoons express only a few, perhaps even only one idea. But that idea is instantly grasped by hundreds of thousands of people, at all levels and frequently remembered a long, long time.

We are also slow to accept a cartoonist as a great artist. Brydon Smith, Curator of Contemporary Art in the

National Gallery, believes the profusion of cartoons in newspapers and magazines tends to blur our aesthetic appreciation of them. Edmund Wilson, the U.S. critic, has prophesied Macpherson's cartoons will one day be found hanging in our art galleries.

They are very funny cartoons.

They are also works of art.

* * *

Footnote #1

Pony Boy, as sung by Duncan Macpherson:

"Pony Boy, Pony Boy,
Won't you be my Pony Boy.
Carry me, Carry me
Off across the Plains.

Don't say no, here I go,
Off and away with you.
Giddy up, giddy up, giddy up,
Oh, my Pony Boy."

AN INTERVIEW WITH A MILLIONAIRE

Dateline: Toronto 1970

For a millionaire, Honest Ed Mirvish receives some strange letters. Like this recent one from a lady in Thornbury, Ontario:

"Dear Mr. Mirvish:

"I have the Royal Chamber Pot used by King Edward VII when he visited Canada as the Prince of Wales. The chamber pot was in the suite occupied by him at Chorley Park, then the residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

"It came into my possession via Lieutenant Governor Matthews, as a gift to the President of the Bank of Toronto and I have since fallen heir to it !!!

"It is *Delph Blue*, plus an antique gold pattern with raised pear handles on the lid. I have been in your restaurant and have seen your wonderful collection of chamber pots, and because I want a *final resting place of some importance* for my Royal Chamber Pot I am taking the liberty of writing to ask if you would be interested in obtaining same for your fabulous collection."

This lady's Royal Chamber Pot will probably end up with 50 other chamber pots in Ed's Warehouse, the most fantastically furnished restaurant in the world.

The three-floor restaurant is jammed with *objets d'art*. Each floor is a rainbow blaze of Tiffany lamps and illuminated stained glass windows. You thread your way between huge ornamental urns, white marble statues, carved wooden figures, blackamoors and bronzes of museum quality. The chair you sit upon may be a Chinese chair of beautifully carved ebony or teak, a relic from the boardroom of some defunct company, a Salvation Army bargain or an elegant piece of the French Empire period.

There are great curio cabinets filled with collections of glittering cruets, antique coin banks and rare china. The

walls are covered with huge oil paintings, enormous mirrors in gilt frames, thousands of photos of stage and screen celebrities and old-fashioned signs which proclaim:

**"BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS
AND LOOSE WOMEN"**

Or,

**STREET GIRLS BRINGING SAILORS
INTO THE HOTEL
MUST PAY FOR ROOM
IN ADVANCE**

And, of course, there are the chamber pots, 50 of them lining the wall of one room. Today they are filled with flowing plants. But when Mirvish first opened the restaurant, on January 20th, 1966, he confided to me, tongue-in-cheek, that he had considered using the chamber pots as coffee cups.

With a perfectly straight face, Mirvish said, "That way we could have advertised the largest cup of coffee in the world."

The Mirvish sense of mischief shows through the restaurant. As well as the bawdy signs he makes much use of red velvet, potted ferns and glittering brass and mirrors. What with private courting parlors upstairs and love birds twittering in cages downstairs, the lush atmosphere is somewhat reminiscent of a family saloon or a Victorian bordello.

This may be intentional. Certainly Mirvish and his right-hand man, Yale Simpson, joked about the name before the restaurant opened.

"It was a warehouse originally," they said. "So we'll just call it a warehouse. But watch how you pronounce that."

The first published novel of Ed's brother, Bob Mirvish, the sailor and novelist was, in fact about just such an establishment. It was called "*A House Of Her Own*," and he once planned making it into a musical.

The decor of the Warehouse is sometimes mistakenly attributed to Herbert Irvine, of Eaton's, the dean of Canadian interior decoration and design. It's well known that Irvine guided the restoration of the Royal Alex.

Irvine enjoys the restaurant but points out it could only have been brought about by a wildly enthusiastic amateur. He adds, "It is the one restaurant in town, to which I always take visitors. There's nothing like it in the world, not even Maxim's in Paris."

Actually the restaurant is an almost perfect blend of the two main Mirvish enterprises. The Honest Ed Discount Store on Bloor is a raucous, gawdy fun-house. The Royal Alex is an elegant restoration of one of the world's great theatres. The Warehouse blends the two.

When Mirvish planned the restaurant, as a natural adjunct to the theatre, he asked a large fixtures firm to suggest a design.

"They came up with a figure of \$150,000. — I think they usually figure about \$1000. a seat for a restaurant," said Mirvish. "But their design looked like just any other restaurant to me, all arborite and chandeliers. So I thought, we'll fix it up ourselves from odds and ends."

The old marble washroom partitions from the Royal Alex were cut up into counter tops and stands. The bricks which had supported old boilers in the basement were fashioned into attractive separating walls with extruded concrete. An old set from Flower Drum Song became wallpaper. Old photos from the Royal Alex files were framed and hung, as well as some huge paintings found in the cellars.

Mirvish and his wife, Anne, already owned some antiques but now they began buying in earnest, from dealers, from wreckers and at auctions. They bought from Frank Crane on Church street, from Trevor Antiques on Yonge and the Prince of Serendip on Gerrard.

A lady dealer named Gay Hoyt phoned one day to say she had a beautiful stained glass window for him. He liked it, but the price of \$800. seemed high.

Mrs. Hoyt was a little disappointed. "You know, it's two o'clock Saturday," she said, "and I haven't made a sale yet."

Mirvish said, "How much for the whole shop?"

Thinking it was a joke, she said, "Ten thousand dollars?"

"All right," said Mirvish. "I'll take it."

His buying has continued to this day. Only a few weeks

ago he and Yale Simpson attended an estate auction at the village of Embro, near Woodstock, which featured Japanese vases, urns and jardinières dating back to the 16th century. They spent \$8000. for 8 items. Their purchases included a cloisonné bronze lamp, originally a temple incense burner; a Royal Kozan Vase with an eight-headed dragon design for \$1000; and a Royal Satsuma vase by 16th century Japanese artist Kinkoyan, for \$2300.

Mirvish has gotten some great bargains and missed out on others. The great, brass doors at the entrance to the entertainment lounge, Ed's Folly, came from the old Imperial Bank of Commerce building at the south-east corner of Bay and King. In 1928 they cost the bank \$8000. Mirvish got them for \$300. But a few years ago, at Lillian Nasseau's shop in New York he was offered a genuine Tiffany piece for \$1200. He didn't take it. It recently sold for \$16,000.

Mirvish says modestly he is always getting into things he doesn't know anything about, and it's ridiculous. He always seems to emerge rather well.

"I think we've done the right thing," he told me. "If we'd done the restaurant in conventional fashion — and gone broke — we'd be stuck with a lot of arborite and fixtures that no one wanted. This way, if we go broke, with all these antiques and things, we can always sell the pieces."

If there's one thing that impresses itself on the eye of patrons, it's the Tiffany lampshades. There are some 200 sitting on tables, suspended from the ceiling and another 100 in the attic rooms above the restaurant. They're insured for some \$200,000.00.

Actually, there isn't an authentic Tiffany lampshade in the restaurant. These are Tiffany-type lampshades and none of them have the small brass plaque which denotes the genuine Tiffany product.

Louis Comfort Tiffany, son of Tiffany the jeweller, was an artist and decorator born on February 18th, 1848. Dissatisfied with the glass available then he established his own studios where he produced glass of many colors and textures, some iridescent. What remains of his work, main-

ly in museums and great private collections, is valued in the thousands of dollars. However, even the lampshades of his imitators and successors are now worth hundreds.

The decor of the restaurant is not quite so haphazard as it might seem. It has a definite atmosphere of its own. It works.

"I don't know how it works," says Herbert Irvine, decorator to The Establishment. "But take those lampshades. He's taken off the glass bead fringes, which were all of different color, and replaced them all with red fringes. Somehow it pulls them all together."

Mirvish has a way of killing two birds with one stone. The red cloth fringes not only bring the lampshades into harmony, but they have ended the problem of glass beads dropping into the customer's soup.

Yale Simpson is an old school chum of Honest Ed's and his right hand man. A photograph of him in a broad-brimmed fedora and a flashy suit, which makes him look like Edward G. Robinson in a gangster role, hangs outside the restaurant. It is labelled, "OUR BELOVED MANAGER."

I talked with this beloved man in the manager's office at the Royal Alex recently. He was answering two phones, signing theatre pay cheques and trying to locate a black sweater which a lady patron had left under her restaurant table. He was also talking to Bob Mirvish, who books New York shows for the Royal Alex, checking box-office figures on the record-breaking *HAIR* and asking the *maitre de* in the Warehouse how many lunches had been served that day.

In between he was showing me a bunch of carpet samples as an indication of how much thought goes into decoration in the Warehouse. The new carpeting he and Ed had decided upon for the restaurant was an old-fashioned flower pattern, rich in reds and golds.

"Nobody in their right mind would buy this today," said Simpson. "It must be Edwardian or Georgian. We found we could get it from James Templeton and Company, a firm in Glasgow. We think it'll work."

Things have been working so well that Ed's Warehouse Restaurant is now actually five restaurants, plus an enter-

tainment lounge known as Ed's Folly. There are two steak houses downstairs and three restaurants above that serving only roast beef. On a normal day close to a thousand people come for lunch, another two or three thousand for dinner. Mirvish has opened a new room every year since he opened. On busy weekends there are still lineups at the door.

The menu still states boldly, "IF YOU LIKE HOME COOKING EAT AT HOME." The price increases since the opening have been modest. The Roast Beef, English Cut, which used to cost \$3.15 is now \$3.95. The Honest Ed Cut, formerly \$3.65 is now \$4.45. The Warehouse Cut formerly \$4.65 is now \$4.95. The free kosher dills which come to each table are used up at the rate of ten 50-lb. drums each day. About fifty tons of beef are consumed each month.

Honest Ed hates roast beef.

"I never ate it," he told me, "until I opened the restaurant. Now when I have a guest such as Debbie Reynolds or Robert Stanfield or Andy Williams, I have to do something. I order an outside cut and struggle through it."

Why did he decide to serve roast beef exclusively when he first opened?

"Everybody told me I was crazy," Mirvish told me. "But it eliminated a lot of problems. With a lot of dishes you need a lot of temperamental chefs. And there were other great restaurants specializing in beef. Simpson's in London. Lowry's in Los Angeles. Schine's in New York."

It also fitted in with his three guiding business principles. Filling a need. Going against the trend, to command attention. And keeping it simple.

Honest Ed Mirvish is far from simple.

But in person he is so modest and self-effacing, so calm and quiet, he sometimes gives this impression. He says the calmness comes from his training in depression years. "When you get mad, you make mistakes."

He is disarmingly candid on nearly every subject, with the one exception of money. I have noticed this in other millionaires and perhaps that is how they get to be millionaires. Several years ago I asked Mirvish if he was a millionaire.

"Well," he said, "I haven't actually taken count lately. You know how it is, when you're buying and selling things"

"A million dollars should be fairly easy to keep track of," I said.

"The term millionaire has lost a lot of its meaning these days," said Mirvish, "with inflation and everything. I can remember buying a corned beef sandwich at Kalb's Delicatessen on Dundas for five cents."

"Forgetting inflation," I said, "are you a millionaire?"

"Another thing," said Mirvish, "I think you'd have to define the term better. I mean, there are *small* millionaires and *big* millionaires."

"Are you either one of those?" I asked.

Mirvish pondered the question. "I suppose," he said finally, "that I might fall into one or the other of those categories."

I can report that the various Mirvish enterprises gross more than \$30,000,000.00 annually. Presumably, even such a crazy guy as Honest Ed manages to hang on to some of this.

Edwin Mirvish was born on July 24, 1914 and is now 56 years old. During his youth he used to pedal a bicycle down to market to buy fruit and vegetables for the family grocery store. When his father died he had to drop out of Central Tech at age 15.

He is of less-than-average height and at one time he had a weight problem. He took off more than 25 pounds by going to "coffee only" for lunch and breakfast and he still follows this regime. He is tanned and healthy-looking. He says he gets the tan in his backyard.

His wife, Anne, to whom he has been married 25 years, says, "At least you could say you get it in the garden."

Ed smiles and continues to say backyard.

Other than dancing, at which he is an expert and a prize-winner, he takes no exercise. He belonged to a golf club but has now resigned. "You killed a whole day with golf and I felt as though I were playing hooky from school. Dancing, I take an hour or two and it's over."

He takes only one or two drinks in an evening, mostly to be sociable, and he does not smoke. His vice is work.

"Anyone who goes into business or builds something," he admits, "is pretty selfish. Even when you are home with your family your mind is on business. It consumes you."

The whole Mirvish clan seems remarkably unaffected and unpretentious. They pursue a variety of interests. Honest Ed's sister is married to David Lazarus, who runs the Mickey Finn Drygoods store on Dundas near Keele. His brother Bob Mirvish now books plays in New York for the Royal Alex, but he continues his own dual career as sailor and novelist, as he has for the past 25 years. He regularly ships out to sea as a radio operator and writes novels about the sea-faring life. He has published 14 books and his best, such as *The Eternal Voyager*, are excellent portrayals of the roving life. His novel of wartime Russia, called *The Last Capitalist*, has just been sold as a movie.

Ed's mother, Annie, still reports daily for work in the dress department at Honest Ed's store. Ed says she is 82.

"But if you ask her," he says, "she'll say she's only 57."

Mirvish's wife, Anne, is a sculptor, with her own studio on Markham Street and takes a lively interest in theatre and the arts. Their only son, David, did not continue to university after high school, much to their disappointment. He is now involved in the various Mirvish enterprises, but is making his own name in the art world.

He recently held a gala opening for the new David Mirvish Gallery on Markham Street which is among the finest of privately-owned galleries. He does not operate on commission but buys and sells on his own behalf. At a recent important showing of contemporary art at the Metropolitan in New York, works from his gallery outnumbered those from any other. Ed is not fond of modern abstract art.

"Anne originally interested me in art and antiques," he says. "Now she and David have moved on to new things, but I still prefer the old."

Despite this, he has made significant contributions to the arts of today. A number of home-brew productions have made their debut at the Royal Alex and Mirvish financed the New York appearance of Eric Nicols' play, *Like Father, Like Son*. On Markham street he has created

Canada's largest art colony where working writers, painters and sculptors can rent studios from \$20. to \$40. per month, heat and light included.

The Mirvish philosophy is something he lives by, but it is not particularly a religious one.

"I attend the synagogue on high holidays, that's about all. I'm afraid I don't feel the way I shake my head, or beat my breast, is going to make much difference in the end. Actually, I now belong to three synagogues. The one I first attended split into conservative and orthodox. Later, Anne wanted to join the Reform Temple. So I now pay dues to three — they'll have to argue it out who's going to bury me."

His brother Bob married a striking New York career girl, Lucille Angela Racciopi de Giglio, from a good Italian Catholic family. The marriage brought silence from a few rigid relatives on both sides, but Ed's only comment was, "Bob's over twenty-one." It was a sly dig, as Bob was actually 42 at the time.

Ed's feeling that we're here only for a short time is now affecting his business future. "We're offered deals all the time," he says. "To go public, to go into a chain operation with complete financial backing. Unless someone can tell me I'm going to live 200 years, I don't see much point to it. It just means more time sitting with accountants and lawyers and estate planners. It's only sensible if it's something interesting in itself."

His immediate interest is still in restaurants. He'd like to see a dozen ethnic restaurants on Markham street, offering the cuisine of a dozen countries. He's also purchased the Lunkenheimer-Morrison Building, just west of the Warehouse on King Street.

Here he may go ahead with a totally new restaurant concept, something like "*Durgen's Park*", a hundred year old restaurant in Boston. "It's a Bohemian place," he says. "Any kind of dress goes and big helpings of food are served on long, wooden tables. The kind of place where the mayor can find himself sitting next to a truck driver."

"I'd like to see it pay its way, of course," he says, "but mainly I'd hope it would be a cheap and interesting place,

full of characters."

For a man with his resources, he's not full of great new schemes. "You've read about the Peter Principle," he says with a smile. "Maybe I feel I've reached my level of incompetence — and I'd better concentrate on holding the line."

What's the meaning of life?

Mirvish says, "I don't brood about life and death, but I do speculate on things. I often ask myself what's it all about? I can't answer the question."

Chapter 15

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELVIS PRESLEY

Dateline: New York 1956

Just before going to New York to interview Elvis Presley, I was watching a TV comedian running through his act on the Ed Sullivan show. Finishing off, the comedian bowed to the camera and said,

"And good night, Elvis Presley, *whatever* you are!"

I laughed with the rest, for taking a swipe at "Pelvis" Presley was the fashion. Down in Halifax, Station CJCH had banned his records. In Chicago, a disk jockey broadcast an "Open Letter to Elvis Presley," warning him against corrupting the youth of the nation.

Toronto Telegram columnist and newscaster Frank Tumpane called Elvis' Heartbreak Hotel and Tutti-Frutti records the "mumbling and yowling of non-existent lyrics . . . approaching the obscene." Tumpane announced his formation of an "Elvis Suppresley Club."

After talking to Elvis, the only moral I can draw from all the brickbats is that if you are a handsome, red-blooded American boy, who likes girls, goes to church, does not drink or smoke, is good to his parents and makes \$1,000,000 by singing as though you meant it—watch out! This is How To Be Very, Very Unpopular.

Of course, the real motive behind all the criticism might be very, very apparent to a psychologist. You can't have half the dolls in the country swooning at your feet—and still be a hit in the men's locker room.

The solemn accusation that these old codgers throw at our boy is that he is "selling sex."

Come now, fellows.

Ever hear of Marilyn Monroe, Anita Ekberg, Jane Russell, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Eartha Kitt? Or, perhaps in your day, Mae West or Theda Bara? What do you think the girls have been selling? Violin lessons?

Fortunately, the career of our boy Elvis hasn't suffered any from all this criticism by the walking dead. He stands to make \$1,000,000 in his first full year as a profes-

sional, not bad for a boy who was a \$25 a week truck driver 18 months ago.

The week after the Ed Sullivan show took a crack at him, Elvis knocked the Ed Sullivan show down to second place in popularity, by appearing on the rival Steve Allen show. Sullivan apparently saw the light, for he has now signed Elvis to appear on *his* show, paying him \$50,000 for three appearances.

Nor is the sideburned singer losing any popularity with the girls who keep trying to break down the walls of his dressing room. All he loses there is the occasional shirt. As a friend of his, also from the Deep South, remarked: "Seems like all this boy's got to do is jes' show hisself and the gals git to thrashin' round and pantin' like mountain mules."

With two other reporters, I talked to Elvis in his New York hotel suite. Elvis, a well-built youngster of close to six feet, stood to shake hands with each of us, saying "Ah'm pleased to meet you, suh."

The most striking thing about him was his eyes, accentuated by such dark circles under them it looked as though he had applied eye shadow. The long sideburns made him look a little like Clark Gable playing Rhett Butler. He wore a sport shirt open at the throat, grey suit, yellow diamond socks and black-and-white sport shoes.

There were two other men in the room, Gerald Thorpe, a publicity director for RCA Victor, and Col. Tom Parker, a Tennessee colonel who was Elvis' manager. He'd formerly handled such top western singers as Eddie Arnold and Hank Snow.

Someone asked Elvis his immediate plans and he said he was going down to Memphis, Tenn., next week to do a show there.

"Don't be so modest," said Parker, lighting a cigar, "tell them what show."

Elvis rubbed his eye like an embarrassed small boy. "It's a benefit," he said. "The Milk Show, for the Memphis Variety Club."

The Colonel removed his cigar from his lips. "Don't be so modest. Tell 'em about the kids."

Elvis shifted uncomfortably in his chair in front of

the fireplace, and blushed.

"Ah, it's nothing much," said Elvis, shifting uncomfortably again. "It's jest on mah way to the theatuh at nights Ah'm always bringin' in a bunch of kids with me. They look kinda poor, like they ain't got the money to get in, so Ah tell the doorman to let 'em in with me."

I wrote in my notebook: "Elvis unspoiled by fame. Remembers what it was like to be poor."

* * *

Elvis rubbed his eye again and we noticed a large, glittering ring he was wearing, and asked him about it. He took it off and handed it over. The ring has four large black star sapphires, one at each corner, with the initials "E.P." in the centre. The initials were set in diamonds.

"Thet was a gift tuh me," said Elvis, "from Judy Spreckels—"

"The wife of Adolph B. Spreckels?"

"Yeah—she was his sixth wife. She came to see me at Las Vegas and gave it tuh me. There was supposed to be a big romance 'tween her and me."

"Was there a big romance?"

Elvis smiled and shook his head. "No, no. She just liked me. She's a lot older'n Ah am."

"How old is she? Forty, forty-five?"

"No," said Elvis. "But she must be pretty close to twenty-five."

One reporter looked puzzled. "Six husbands? And only twenty-five?"

"No," said Elvis, "*She* didn't have six husbands. She was *his* sixth wife. But they're not married now. She has a boy friend. Both of them used to come to see me sing. He knows she gives me all this stuff. She gave me a western belt buckle, too, in sterling silver, with the names of all mah songs engraved on it. She just enjoys giving gifts."

As we handed back the ring, we noticed a beautiful wrist watch Elvis was wearing and he gave it to us to examine. Where ordinary watches had numbers, this one had diamonds.

"It's worth about eight ninety-five," said Elvis.

"Eight dollars and ninety-five cents?" said a reporter. "Looks worth more than that."

"Eight hundred and ninety-five *dollars*," corrected Elvis, laughing. "I asked the man who gave it to me, Mistuh Frank Williams, owner of the New Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas."

The Colonel removed his cigar again. "That brings up the newspaper story about Elvis laying an egg in Las Vegas."

"Yes," said Elvis. "Mistuh Williams said to come back any time, and he gave me this watch. You wouldn't think he'd do that if Ah laid an egg."

"It was Dorothy Kilgallen wrote you laid an egg in Las Vegas," said one reporter. "She's the one who said you wanted to get paid for interviews, too. How much do we owe you for this one?"

Elvis laughed. "Ah nevah said anything like that in mah life."

The Colonel said, "This story said after asking for money Elvis hopped in his Cadillac and drove off. You've never even had a car up here in New York, have you, Elvis?"

"No," said Elvis. "Ah nevah met Miss Kilgallen yet, either. As for turnin' down interviews, ah have yet to turn down mah first reporter or disk jockey."

"How do you feel about these stories that have been written about you?"

"Ah don't mind them, ah mean blame them," said Elvis. "They jest tryin' to do a job, they got a job to do, jest like me. Ah would like to set down and talk to some of them. Try to make them like me a little more."

"To get back to this egg," said the Colonel, "Country Song Roundup Magazine is running a contest—Win A Date With Elvis Presley. They got nine girls handling the mail. Why, our own mail is fantastic. Seventy-eight thousand letters in five weeks. We're getting a lot of mail from Canada too—from one town—what's the name of that funny town? Winnipeg, that's it. Four thousand letters from Winnipeg alone."

The RCA Victor man said, "Of the top ten best-selling RCA Victor records in Canada, eight of them are by Elvis."

"Ah jest wish," said Elvis, "ah could take more of those

fans on a tour of the country, let 'em see what this kind of life is like. Packin'. Unpackin'. Livin' in hotels."

The RCA Victor man said, "Heartbreak Hotel is close to the million and a half mark. The really phenomenal thing is the album. Ten thousand is a good sale for an L.P. album at that price. Elvis' has sold over four hundred thousand already."

"Do you dislike travelling, Elvis?"

"Well, no," said Elvis. "Ah guess it kind of gets in your blood. Ah've noticed if Ah'm home now for a few days, Ah begins to get restless. Right now Ah'm playin' about ten dates a month. Whereevah—" he glanced at the RCA man—"we can tie in with RCA Victor sales."

"Are your fans still pulling you apart?"

Elvis grinned. "Oh, Ah lost a few shirts. In Atlantic City they bust into mah dressin' room while the policeman was gettin' a coffee." He grinned some more as he recalled the scene. "What made it more exciting was at the same time they bust in, all the lights went off. Theah was fifty of them there—"

"Fifty of them, trying to get into your dressing room?"

"No. Theah was fifty of them *did* get in. It was pretty crowded."

"What did they do to you?"

Elvis shifted happily in his chair. "A little bit of everything. They grab hold of you, pull your hair, kiss you. They busted mah bottom lip—"

"How do you feel about that kind of thing?"

"How do Ah feel about it?" said Elvis. "Why, Ah enjoys it. Only thing is, Ah get tickled. And when Ah gets tickled, Ah gets pretty weak."

A puzzled reporter asked, "You mean they tickle you?"

"No," said Elvis. "Ah just gets real *tickled*."

"Ah don't follow you," said the reporter. "I mean, I don't follow you."

"It's like this," explained Elvis. "Jest like on the football field. Ah'd get real tickled, laughin' so hard, Ah was helpless. Like somebody did something funny, like dropping the ball or something. Ah'd get so tickled, laughin', Ah was liable to fall right down on the field, helpless like."

Elvis leaned forward in his chair to explain better. "You see, they get runnin' up and down, screamin,' and when they gets close to you, they gets pretty wild. And when they gets real wild, Ah begins to get tickled, and Ah gets helpless. In Kansas City one night I started to sing You Ain't Nothin' But A Hound Dog and six thousand of them ran for the stage. Ah ran through a door, but they took the door right off the hinges as they came after me. Ah ran back into the alley wheah the car was waitin'—"

The memory began to tickle Elvis and he stopped for a minute, laughing. "Theah was this one right on mah heels, when Ah slammed the door of the car, she kept right on comin'. Ran her nose right into the door."

The Colonel said hastily, "Mind you, it's only been a few of the papers giving us a hard time. I don't understand all this shouting about sex, after that last Milton Berle show. Elvis had been on TV *seven times* before that show, doing exactly the same thing. And there wasn't a single complaint."

"Not a single complaint?" asked a reporter.

"Well," admitted the Colonel, "the odd little complaint here and there. You always get those."

"It's records that have made Elvis," said the RCA Victor man. "And you can't see what Elvis is doing on a record."

"How did you come to make your first record, Elvis?"

"Jest by accident," said Elvis. "Ah was driving this truck and Ah saw this sign, Memphis Recording Service. Ah had nevah sung in mah life before."

"Did you have your guitar?"

"Yes, Ah—"

"Do you mean you carried your guitar around in the truck?"

"No," said Elvis, "Ah didn't jest see this sign and go right in. Ah made a note of it in mah mind, and Ah went back on my own time. The man there was Mistuh Sam Phillips, who owns Sun Records—"

"You mean anyone can go in and they'll make a record for them?"

"Ef you pay four dollars," said Elvis. "He does other things besides owning Sun Records. He records wed-

dings, all sorts of things. I was making this record jest for myself."

"What did you sing?"

"Ah sang That's When Your Heartaches Begin, and My Happiness. A couple of things the Inkspots were doing just then. Mistuh Phillips sat with his head buried in his hands—like this—for forty-five minutes. When Ah finished, he said, 'You have a very interesting voice there.' He said he would call me some day, and a year and a half later he did call me."

"We bought Elvis' contract from Phillips," said the RCA Victor man. "Forty thousand dollars. It's the highest price we've ever paid for a contract."

A reporter asked Elvis how to describe his style of singing. He said he'd heard it described as a mixture of rock and roll and hick.

The Colonel looked pained. "We refer to it as 'country western' not *hick*," he said. "But in any case Elvis' style has never been classified. Actually he sings in 12 different styles."

"Ah never sang anywhere before except in church," said Elvis. "Ah sang for 12 years in the choir of the First Assembly of God, a Pentecostal church in mah home town of Ocoola. Where's that? About forty miles from Memphis, Tennessee."

"What do the church people think of the kind of singing you're doing now?"

"Ah don't know," said Elvis, as though the idea had never occurred to him. "Of course, truly religious people don't talk about that sort of thing. Ah know Ah gits invited back to church by the Reverend James E. Ham-mill every time Ah goes home. Ah've also sung at Youth For Christ meetings, and Teen'agers For Christ."

"The same style?"

"Well," said Elvis, "a hymn is different."

"What about family?" asked a reporter. "Brothers or sisters?"

Elvis shook his head.

The Colonel said, "Elvis was born twins. The other twin was born daid."

"Were your parents poor?"

"Not especially," said Elvis. "We weren't rich, but we didn't go hungry. Ah've retired mah father from the paint factory where he worked." Elvis laughed. "He says he's working harder now than before he retired. He's looking after the mail—we always send a card to people who write in—and receiving visitors. Ah built a fifty-thousand-dollar home for them. We got one maid."

"What about all these Cadillacs I hear about?" asked a reporter.

"Theah's jest four of them," said Elvis. "A blue one, a white one, a pink one and a yellow one."

"Why four? Are they just spares?"

The Colonel removed his cigar. "Actually Elvis just drives one Cadillac. His parents have one. And the other two are for people in the show."

"The show?"

"Yes. We take our own show on the road. An orchestra and so forth. About twenty-five people. We go into town, rent an auditorium or theatre, sell the tickets."

"Do you have any dates on the road?"

"Yes, Ah have dates," said Elvis. "Ah guess Ah wouldn't be human if Ah didn't. But no one girl in particular."

"Are you thinking of getting married?"

(When Elvis was asked this in Amarillo, Tex., he was quoted as saying: "Why buy a cow when you can get milk through the fence?")

* * *

The Colonel answered for him. "We get thousands of letters saying, 'Don't let him get married.'"

"Ah been in love," said Elvis. "Least Ah thought Ah was. A couple Ah would've married, at fifteen, in high school. One was a little taller than me, and a little heavier. Nineteen, too. Ah made her a few proposals." He laughed. "The older you git, you sit back and laugh at the things you did."

"You ever thought of writing any songs yourself?" asked a reporter.

"Well, no. Ah mean, anyone can put down words that rhyme. But to make a song you got to have inspiration. Least, Ah guess you do."

"How about movies?"

"Yes, Ah signed a seven-year contract with Mistuh Hal Wallis. They're writing a movie for me now."

"What about these songs you're singing now? It's a question basically of selling sex, isn't it?"

Elvis looked uncomfortable. "Ah nevah looked at it that way. Ah don't *try* to sell sex."

"How about your parents? What do they think about it?"

"Well, mah folks is in the same boat Ah am. One day Ah said, 'Momma, do you think Ah'm vulgah on the stage?'"

"What'd she say?"

"No, son, you just do what you feel. But you work too hard. You're nevah going to be an old man. You wear yourself out.' I said, 'Nevah mind that, Momma, *do you think Ah'm vulgah?*' She said, 'No, son, you just do what you feel.'"

The Colonel put in, "Everyone gets it. Look at Sammy Davis."

"What about the way you wiggle around on the stage?"

"Ah don't try to be sexy. That's just mah way of movin' around."

"What about you, yourself? I mean, you're not excited, sexually, when you move around like that?"

Elvis looked disturbed. "No, suh. Why, if Ah was like that Ah would be in a sanatorium. Ah would be a maniac."

"What about this flirting with the girls in your audiences? The way you reach out to them?"

Elvis looked even more disturbed. "Reach out for them?"

"Well, you know what I mean. Your familiarity with them. Winking at them, and that sort of thing."

The Colonel said, "Elvis don't reach out for them. Sometimes, maybe, he *responds* back. Those gals in the front row wink at him, he winks *back*."

"Yes," said Elvis. "Ah certainly don't walk up to strangers and become familiar with them."

"Elvis is friendly," said the Colonel. "In a restaurant, the waitress recognizes him and gets friendly, he'll respond back to her. There's no law against respondin' back."

We all agreed there was no law against respondin' back, and then the Colonel looked at his watch. It was time for Elvis to be getting along to his rehearsal on the Steve Allen show. We all shook hands and left.

After the Steve Allen show that night, I waited outside the TV theatre, along with about 50 others, mostly young girls, for Elvis to appear. When he finally appeared, he autographed one girl's arm for her, kissed another one, then climbed up on the back seat of an open convertible his friends had brought for him, and he drove off down 44th street.

A man standing beside me, watching the crowd, said, "Who's that?"

"Who's that?" I said. "That's Elvis Presley."

"Who's he?" said the man.

Chapter 16

A TYPICAL OLD NEWSPAPERMAN

Dateline: Toronto 1965

This gnome appeared in my office. It carried a gnarled walking stick. It peered at me from under bushy, white eyebrows.

This gnome said, "I have come to take you to lunch."

"Where?" I said.

"At *La Scala*, which is a fine, Italian restaurant, run by Greeks. It has a wonderful, golden chair in front where an old man, if he gets tired, can sit and rest."

During our walk to the restaurant Greg Clark was halted and engaged in conversation by six different people. A Liberal Senator, two old ladies from Saskatchewan, a young man, a business friend and a veteran of World War II.

It was only a short walk.

Greg has a favorite story about the countless strangers who stop him on the street to talk to him about his newspaper stories. One day a white-haired old lady peered at him through her glasses and said,

"Pardon me—but are you *the* Gregory Clark?"

That day Greg was in a pixie mood. He shook his head.

"No," he said, "I'm the *other* Gregory Clark."

The old lady came closer and peered into his face.

"Ah, yes," she said. "*Now* I can see the difference!"

At *La Scala*, Greg was welcomed as an old friend. When we were seated Greg said, "First, we will have a drink. I am permitted one drink at lunch. I will have a J&B and water, please."

The waiter brought our drinks and Greg picked up his glass and looked at it with affection and respect. He said, "You know, when I had my heart attack, Bill Oile, my doctor, said I was to be allowed only one drink at lunch and two drinks before dinner.

"But he said I had to use a measuring cup. A thing called a jigger, I believe. So I went down to Eaton's and made enquiries and finally came home with this strange

little thing.

"I measured out a drink with it and poured the drink into my glass. I stared at this little drink which I was now allowed, not quite believing my eyes. Then it dawned on me—what a wonderful life I must have had! I was so excited I had to phone up Gil Purcell. 'Gil,' I said, 'I've just made the most wonderful discovery! I've just poured myself a drink with that little jigger Bill Oile made me get. You know what? *All my life I've been drinking doubles!*'"

Still laughing, Greg raised his glass to those good old days. A young Italian waiter named Ottavio brought us the elaborate *La Scala* menu.

"What a beautiful menu," said Greg. "Imagine all this wonderful Italian food being cooked by Greeks."

He peered at the waiter over the top of his glasses. "That's right, isn't it? You're the only Italian in the place?"

"No, no, no, sir," protested Ottavio. "Here we are all Italians! There is only one Greek."

Greg said, "Ah, well. It made a better story the other way. As a reporter, I'm just what my son said. James Murray Clark. The one who was killed with the Regina Rifles."

"What did he say?"

"He read one of my stories in the old Star and he said, 'Dad, you're not a reporter you're a *troubadour!*'"

"Of course," said Greg. "I wasn't supposed to be the reporter. Fred Griffin was the great Star reporter. He supplied the facts—I supplied the human interest."

"Were you sent on the same stories?"

"All the time. Old Hindmarsh of the Star was under the misapprehension Griffin and I were enemies—instead of great friends. He thought sending us on the same story would make us work twice as hard. It was one of those clumsy ideas editors get. But we writers should try to be kind to editors. They have a terrible job."

I took out my notebook and began making notes.

"What are you doing?" said Greg.

"I'm making notes about you," I said. "Since you have refused to put the real Greg Clark in your books, I am

going to use him myself."

"HMMMMMM," said Greg. "There's been a lot of people interviewing me lately. They've been told to update my obituary, I guess. They ask me things like, What is your favorite book? I have no favorites. I jump into a book, the way I jump into a canoe. I enjoy the rapids, the calm places, it doesn't matter where it goes. Sometimes I'm afraid I have no critical faculty whatsoever. I just like everything and everybody."

Greg went on, "I lost my religion at sixteen, you know, from reading over my head. Then the war finished it off completely. Well, almost. I was still a bit of a Puritan. I couldn't go out chasing after women the way others did in the war. I used to say, No son of mine is going to have a whore for a mother! Presbyterian pride, I guess."

"No," said Greg. "I *do* have a religion. It's love of earth, rock and sky."

"What kind of religion is that?"

"It was an expression of George Russell's," said Greg.

"Who is George Russell?" I said.

"Was," said Greg. "He wrote under the pen name of 'A.E.' An Irish poet who was part of the Irish Revival. When he was called on for an eulogy to a dead friend, he said, Love of earth, rock and sky is a form of worship. That is my religion. Life is so wonderful. I love all of it."

He studied the menu again. "There's my favorite—*linguine a la vongole*—baby clams. But I must force myself to experiment. As I get older I find myself only ordering proven things—things which I know are good."

Greg broke off abruptly and began laughing at his own words.

"Did you hear that?" he asked. "I only order favorites! After I've just finished telling you, at great length, that I have no favorites! *What nonsense men talk!*"

The waiter appeared with his pad and pencil. Greg ordered *ravioli a La Scala* and I ordered the *veal scallopine Marsala*.

"And minestrone," added Greg. "We should have that. Maybe it'll be the thin kind they make in the south of Italy. I think they just throw in a few vegetables at the last minute."

He turned to Ottavio, our waiter. "Do you know that famous restaurant in Naples—*Zia Teressa's*? Auntie Teressa's?"

"I have heard of it, sir."

Greg said, "It was world famous once—I don't know whether it's still there or not. Built out over the Bay of Naples. Wonderful sea food. Auntie Teressa presided at the cash register. Sometimes she'd leave it to lean out an open window, shouting and haggling with the fishermen below, bringing in their catch."

Ottavio said, "I have heard of it, but during the war I was just a child. All I remember is begging and stealing. Once, I remember, I had a whole carton of cigarettes. I was the richest person in my village."

Greg and Ottavio talked more about Italy, then the waiter left with our order.

"I think," said Greg, "I was the only correspondent kicked out of France twice. I landed in Arras on the eve of the 10th of May, just before the roof fell in. That time the correspondents got out at Boulogne, with the British G.H.Q. Then I went back in again with the Canadian Division at Brest, on the 13th of June. They were going to save the 51st Highland Division, which was cut off at Ste. Valerie. But that didn't work and we came out at Brest again, on the 17th."

"Your war diaries must be interesting."

"No," said Gregg. "You can see them if you want. But they're not the stuff of literature. Even at a time like Dunkerque, there's only a few notes about some marvellous birds I saw at the time. To keep up this role of mine, I wrote only the commonplace things."

"What was that remark Hemingway made about you, before he went to live in Paris?"

Greg smiled. "Hemingway said, 'Greg, you're going to peter out your life on some warm hearthstone.' But I was wrong about him, too. When he was hanging around Jimmy Frise and me at the old Star Weekly, he used to bring me these little pieces he'd written. Hard, flat, ugly little stories. I thought they were terrible. Not at all the kind of thing you did for the Star Weekly. Occasionally he would write something about fishing or hunting which

I liked. If that happened I think he took it home and tore it up. If I liked it, it wasn't any good! I remember seeing him during the war, in London. He was in hospital with a great bandage on his head, from a car accident in a blackout. When I came in the room, the first thing he said was: 'Well, Greg, how have I done? Not, Hello, Greg, or How are you or anything, but, *How Have I Done!* He was a great egotist. I made my usual mistake. I said, The best thing you ever wrote was *The Green Hills of Africa*. Hemingway reached over to the table beside his bed and poured himself a half-tumbler of straight whiskey, that high. Before saying a word, he drank it down, one gulp, then he turned to me and said, *Greg, you always were a damn fool!*"

Greg laughed at the memory.

We finished our meal and Ottavio brought the bill. Greg insisted on having the bill. Occasionally I've argued with Greg about paying the bill, but always lost. Greg always has some good reason he should be allowed to pay. Today, for some reason, I did not even argue.

It took a little while to settle the bill because Greg, for some superstitious reason, will not accept a two-dollar bill in his change, and because Mr. John Grieco, the owner of *La Scala*, came to say goodby.

Outside, finally, we walked along a sunlit street lined with old houses. One had been torn down to make way for parking lot. This exposed the wall of the old house next to it and there, painted on the bricks was an ancient billboard, which had been hand-painted there a hundred years before. The old-fashioned lettering advertised a sign painting company, long out of existence.

"Look at that," said Greg. "As good as the day it was painted. Almost worth coming back to take a picture of, isn't it?"

After admiring the old sign, we walked on.

"You know," said Greg, "I've made a very interesting discovery. You don't change when you grow old. You remain just the same. But everything else changes. Your home. Your friends. Your city. The things you are used to just disappear, one by one. And you are left alone."

On Yonge Street, we parted company.

"I am going this way," said Greg, "to buy a mobile in Kresge's. My housekeeper, Mrs. Armstrong, tells me you can buy them there for only twenty-five cents. I have a lot in the house now, including a wonderful Japanese one my son-in-law, Hiro, brought me. But two more will be useful. I love the sound of them when there is a little breeze."

He turned away with a slight, half-courtly, half-mocking bow.

An hour later, back in my office, the phone rang. It was Greg, his voice cheery again.

"That next story of mine," he said, "when is it scheduled?"

I found out the scheduling date of his next Weekend story and gave it to him.

"Good. That's fine," he said. "Because I have another story ready that should go soon."

I thanked him again, for the lunch and the conversation.

"Yes," said Greg. "We must do it again soon. However," he said, "the next time *you* can pay for it. *A rivederci.*" He hung up, chuckling.

"*A rivederci,*" I said, getting in the last word.

Chapter 17

AN ASSIGNMENT IN PARIS

Dateline: Paris 1961

Corinne Calvet, the temperamental actress, who shares her time between Hollywood and Paris, recently announced she was going to write an *exposé* of Hollywood. One morning not long afterwards I happened to find myself in Paris and thought, *Why not drop in on Miss Calvet and see if she is exposing anything new?* I got hold of her unlisted phone number and called her up. Miss Calvet, in a husky, romantic voice that was half-French, half-English, said I could come over to her apartment.

Her apartment proved to be the entire top floor of an old, elegant apartment house on the avenue MacMahon, close to the *Arc de Triomphe*. It was beautifully furnished with antique sofas and chairs, large gilt mirrors and marble fireplaces. I was shown into a small drawing room. On the mantel were three of Miss Calvet's movie trophies. One said she had been chosen Miss Golden Globe Of 1952 by the Hollywood Foreign Correspondents Association. I was examining this when Miss Calvet, in a simple white linen dress and without make-up, entered. I introduced myself.

"Ah, Toronto!" said Miss Calvet. "I remembaire when subway opening first time. I am making publicity tour. You know publicity tour for peecture? The exhibitor, he get you to pose for peectures with everyone in city he wants a favor from. I find myself standing in front of a store full of boulder hats. I theenk to myself, *What have you to do with boulder hats?* This is being an actress?"

"'Boulder' hats?" I said.

"Yes, boulder hats," said Miss Calvet. She made a round shape with her hands. "I speak a bastard French and a bastard English — and when one puts them together you have what I speak."

I dropped the subject of bowlers and came right to the point of my interview. "Miss Calvet, I'd like to interview you about the *exposé* you're writing on Hollywood."

Miss Calvet came right to the point.

"No," she said.

"No?" I said.

"No," said Miss Calvet. "Eet does not make the sense. I save my *exposé* for the book."

Patiently, I explained at some length to Miss Calvet that a magazine article about her *exposé* would only help the sale of the book, not hurt it. When I judged I had her completely won over, I stopped and waited for her to speak.

"No," said Miss Calvet. "Nothing about my *exposé*. I won't tell you about the producers who want to make love to me before I can get on their peecture, nor about the leading men, nor the talent agencies which are controlling things in packages. Oh, it is bad how the croupiers are taking the places from the creators, but I weel tell all in my book, not to you. But don't go aways. No newspaperman has left my side ever without his story. They don't lose their times with me. It is a big surprise to the Hollywood publicity departments. Same all over the world. Except France. I won't talk to Franch newspapermens."

The door burst open and a small boy ran through the room, pursued by a grey-haired woman. The woman caught him in the next room and there was the sound of a spanking, with loud cries from the boy.

"That's my mothaire," said Miss Calvet. "And my son Robin. You know my 'usband? Robin's fathaire?"

I named one of Miss Calvet's husbands. "John Bromfield?"

"No, not that one. Jeff Scott."

Robin continued to howl from the next room.

Miss Calvet said, "Eet is difficult to be a writer, an exciting hactress and a mothaire, without one dropping over the other."

"Dropping over the other?" I said.

"Yes," said Miss Calvet. "Overlapping. That is a Calvetism. I theenk transition from mothaire to actress is most hardest, because mothaire is natural state. Eet is all right some days when I wake up in the morning and have all my mind. Write that down, please. That is another Calvetism. But eet's not good other days. Then all my people come in, I say, 'Don't speak to me,' everyone backs out."

The door of the room opened silently and five-year-old Robin tried to creep in on his hands and knees without

being observed.

Miss Calvet collared him. "Thank you for opening the door, *mon amour*. Now kees me and go play. We do not need you for this conversation."

As he left Miss Calvet said, "Children are wonderful. I weesh I had a baby from every time I have been in love."

"Wouldn't the apartment be kind of crowded?" I asked.

"Oh, not from every leetle flirtation we have all the time!" cried Miss Calvet. "Just the really in-love times. No, I am not bad when I am married in Hollywood. The magazines were always looking, but the worst theeng they could find to say about me was my 'usband was looking tired. No, love is wonderful. Lovers do not need anything else. They should give lovaires only bread and water. Maybe wine."

"You mean Omar Khayyam's line," I said, "about a jug of wine, a loaf of bread . . .?"

"Don't be taking any lines away from me!" cried out Miss Calvet.

The door opened again and in bounded a large black French poodle, followed by a man on a leash.

"This is Fleep," said Miss Calvet, embracing the dog. "Fleep?" I said.

"F-L-I-P," said Miss Calvet, spelling it out. "Fleep." And this is . . . She began to introduce the handsome young man who had been walking the dog, but she stopped. "No. You cannot mention his name in the article, because his divorce is not ready yet. You can call heem only The Bodyguard. Yes. The Bodyguard." She laughed.

I shook hands with The Bodyguard.

He went to mix us drinks while Miss Calvet showed me around the apartment. She picked up two oil paintings.

"I just bought these two. Which do you like?"

One was an abstract, the other, two Eskimo heads.

I said I liked the Eskimo heads.

"No," said Miss Calvet. "That's no good. The other one is the good one. I work for weeks to do it."

"You painted it?"

"Yes. Both of them. I tell you I buy them to make you honest."

I looked more closely at the abstract painting. After a while I could see it was not really an abstract. The lines resolved into figures in evening dress, and leering faces over champagne glasses, or perhaps not faces, but masks. It was an interesting painting.

"You must be quite creative," I said.

"Yes," said Miss Calvet. "Also I write poetry. You want a poem? All right, I write you a poem now."

The Bodyguard, it turned out, was also a poet.

"Why do you always fight me?" asked Miss Calvet. "All right. You write a poem, too. We let heem judge."

They both sat down with paper and pencil. In 10 minutes they had both finished. I have no hesitation in saying that Miss Calvet's poem was the better one. It went like this:

*If one could be selfish. One would be an eccentric.
Not caring for other people "Wishing's"
But one heart plays a dirty trick
Held us back and let's us go —*

*To be apart and belong to each parts —
"Breathing" suffering and hopes —
That is: what knowledge can only wish —
To want more. One is a dope:
That collects emotions
Which one should part with
For selfishness without sickness.*

In the conversation that followed the poetry contest, Miss Calvet used two words, "pilose" and "malefic," which I had never heard of, and which I thought must be Calvetisms. But Miss Calvet insisted they were proper English words and they were in the dictionary. We looked them up. She was right. Malefic means productive of disaster, and pilose, covered with hair.

"For six years after I go to Hollywood I learn five new words each night from the dictionary," said Miss Calvet. "After I learn one I put a cross beside it so I won't learn it again. That's a Calvetism. That is why I must write my book myself. No good to have a ghost writer like you who does not know as many words as I do."

I had to admit Miss Calvet had a good point.

"You play chess?" she asked. "All right. We have a game."

She brought out a beautiful antique ivory chess set and we began to play, while Flip and Robin played under the table.

"All right, Crew Cut," said Miss Calvet to Robin, "you can hear this conversation. I always tell him the truth anyway, when he ask. He has given me my old understanding of humility. I was already grown up when I started not to resent human beings but to understand them. You know what we are? Not grown-ups. We are grown-ins. Write that down. But we have that wonderful thing, that love, that power to be human beings and have a mind, a soul, that something is pushing us all to be alive, whether force of nature or God."

Flip, who had fallen asleep on the floor, began to make loud, gurgling noises, a combination of snoring and gasping.

"Heet heem, Robin," said Miss Calvet. "That make him stop."

"I don't like to hit Flip," said Robin.

"Go ahead — just a leetle heet," said Miss Calvet. "Poor Fleep. It is a nervous spasm he has when asleep." She rapped Flip on the nose and the dog bounded to his feet.

Miss Calvet talked as we played chess. "You know the wonderful thing God has created? It is the ability to forget pain as soon as it is over. Because you know it will stop some time it does not hurt as much. The same with love. Every time is better than the last. I think it is the beegest gifts we are given as human beings is this — the law of replacement."

"The law of replacement?" I asked.

"Yes," said Miss Calvet. "If you have the leg cut off it is not so bad if the doctor leave you enough to buy a wooden leg. *Replacement*. A leetle boy of 14 at his first dance sees his girl friend dancing with other boys, the only thing he has to do is get her back in his arms again. *Replacement*. The whole Communist world is badly in need of replacement. When you rent an apartment — like this — you have to make a deposit, in case you break any-

thing, and it needs replacement. You buy a refrigerator and the man is polite to you because in five years you need a replacement."

All this sounded very convincing as Miss Calvet said it, and for that reason, if no other, I am convinced she is a great actress.

By the time Miss Calvet and I had finished our chess game, and we had all had another drink, evening had arrived.

Miss Calvet said, "Come. I will show you my beginnings."

She put on a coat, a mink jacket. She, The Bodyguard and I left the apartment.

Walking down a nearby side street, Miss Calvet explained. "We go to *l'Ecole du Cinéma*. This is why Franch newspapermens do not like me and I am not speaking with them. Before the war I am 14 years old at the *Comédie Française*. I am playing grandfather parts, learning nothings. So I go to *l'Ecole du Cinéma*. The Germans run over France. General Pétain have to decide whether it is better for France to be dead, or have the leg cut off. He decides he shall have an Occupied France and Unoccupied France. We stay — all of us students — at *l'Ecole du Cinéma* — and learn to make motion peectures. After the war this is said to be a bad thing."

We came to a dead end in a cobblestone street and above us loomed an enormous stone building, with broken windows and doors hanging crazily, which looked as though it might have been bombed. It was surrounded by a 10-foot stone wall. Two large steel doors were set in the wall and barred or locked on the inside. At Miss Calvet's command The Bodyguard and I began trying to break them open. The rusty doors creaked and groaned, making a loud noise on the quiet night, and I began to feel nervous. I didn't like the idea of being arrested for breaking into *l'Ecole du Cinéma*.

"Push!" said Miss Calvet. She squeezed half-way through the doors.

"Watch out for your mink!" gasped The Bodyguard.

Miss Calvet pulled off her mink jacket and dropped it inside the doors. "Nevaire mind the mink!" she said. "I

couldn't care less! Push!"

We pushed harder. There was a loud crack as something broke and all three of us tumbled into a large courtyard covered with rubble and debris. Miss Calvet stood silently for a long time.

Finally she said, "There was the ballet class over there." She indicated a room with a large bay window. "It all comes back to me so clearly now. You know, I made love to every boy in the class here." There was a rather loud pause, and she said quickly, "Oh, just keesses, of course."

Stumbling over bricks, old bits of furniture and papers, we began an eerie tour of the dark building. Miss Calvet found old books, old posters, even several old rolls of movie film, which she tried to examine in the darkness. I was delighted when Miss Calvet decided to discontinue her journey back to youth.

"We'll have to come back tomorrow," she said. "In the light."

On our way out, we came to a rope swing, dangling from a tall tree. Miss Calvet couldn't resist having a swing on it. When she was finished she twisted the rope around her neck dramatically, like a hangman's noose, and cried:

"If the Franch people won't accept me — I will hang myself!"

Nothing further occurred as we left *l'Ecole du Cinéma*, except that The Bodyguard nearly fell from the first floor into the basement as he tried to walk across a floor that was no longer there. When all three of us (four including Flip) were finally settled in a nearby French restaurant, the Eden Roc, for a late dinner, I breathed a sigh of relief.

However, things were not quiet for long. There was a bar next to the dining room, and Flip kept making excursions into it to greet new arrivals. Things went well until one of the new arrivals arrived with a large dog on a leash. There was the sound of crashing chairs, barking and growling dogs and excited French. When Miss Calvet rushed out of the dining room and joined the struggle, the noise was exactly doubled.

She returned soon, breathing heavily and dragging Flip. "That crazy man!" she exclaimed. "As eef Fleep would

hurt his dog! He only want to make love to eet!"

The other patrons of the dining room were by now taking a rather lively, if somewhat apprehensive, interest in our table. But all went quietly for a time, until I looked up and saw the goat.

There was a large table in the middle of the dining room, on which a magnificent centrepiece had been created. It was a huge cornucopia, artistically fashioned of all kinds of fruits and vegetables and flowers, including pineapples, pumpkins, squash, radishes, tomatoes, glad-ioli, roses and many other items.

From somewhere a white goat, complete with beard and a fine set of horns, had materialized. I suppose it belonged to the management because it was quietly standing in the middle of the room, nibbling at the edges of the giant centrepiece.

I closed my eyes for a moment, hoping this white, bearded goat would disappear, but when I reopened them, it was still there, munching away like the other diners. I began to wonder just what the exact sequence of events would be when Flip noticed the goat, and just how long it would be before he did.

It wasn't long.

He let out a yelp of sheer delight and sprang for the goat. Miss Calvet leaped after Flip. The Bodyguard leaped after Miss Calvet. One waiter leaped for the goat. Another waiter leaped after Flip. The goat sprang through the centrepiece, reversed himself in the air, and landed facing his unknown attacker. The centrepiece exploded in a beautiful pattern and then fruit, vegetables and flowers rolled to various corners of the room as they landed on the floor.

Order was eventually restored, although bits of conversation between Miss Calvet and the waiters and the proprietor continued for the rest of the meal. Miss Calvet is certainly a "mothaire," an exciting "hactress" and, when she finishes her book, she may turn out to be an exciting writer. But she's certainly going to have trouble keeping these various roles from dropping over each other. That's a Calvetism.

AN ASSIGNMENT IN TORONTO

Dateline: September, 1971

Editors get funny ideas.

Especially lady editors.

This one said, "I'd like you to do a story on Italian cooking."

"I'm not Italian," I pointed out.

"Here's your theme," she said. "Just following an Italian recipe isn't enough. It's the little tricks each chef has in preparing the food."

"I can't even boil an egg," I said.

She went right on. "Bruno Gerussi showed me how to make spaghetti. *Al dente*. Cooks it for eight minutes and begins testing it at seven minutes. Halts the cooking with a cup of cold water—little things like that."

I said, "Let's get Bruno Gerussi to write it."

She gave me the names of four Italian restaurants. "Talk to the chefs about their specialties," she said. "And it's no use trying to get out of it—the food editor is on holiday. Turn it in by Wednesday."

When some of these new liberated women get to be editors, they turn into real fascists.

With a male editor, now, I might have gotten out of the assignment by bursting into tears and running into the washroom. But not this broad. The only chance was to shoot down her idea.

So I phoned this doctor who has a beautiful, dark-eyed wife who makes great *cannelloni*.

"I want to talk to your wife, the Italian," I said.

"She's not an Italian," said the doctor. "She's a Mezzo-Italian. Her mother's Irish."

When she came on the line I explained the problem.

"Your editor's right," she said. "My mother makes what is unquestionably the best macaroni and cheese in the world."

"It's so good the church asked for the recipe. She gave it to them, but what they ended up with didn't taste like

her macaroni and cheese."

"I thought your mother was Irish," I said.

"She is," said the doctor's wife. "She learned from her mother-in-law."

THE USUAL THINGS

Thanking her, I hung up and headed for the Capriccio Restaurant, 580 College St., where I knew the chef and owner, Giacomo Davico. I sat down with Davico and a waiter named Frank Mazzoni to learn the secrets of his Italian salad dressing.

First of all, we opened up a bottle of *Punt E Mes*, a Campari-like aperitif, of vermouth and bitters.

"Not much to our salads," said Davico. "We just sprinkle oil and vinegar on them. A pinch of salt."

I wrote down the recipe. It certainly sounded simple enough. I had another glass of vermouth.

"Not vegetable oil, of course," said Mazzoni, "but olive oil. Any Portuguese, Italian or Greek olive oil is good, but we import the best from Italy. Sasso is the name of it."

"And not ordinary vinegar," said Davico. *Aceto de Vino*. Italian wine vinegar. From Bertozzi's in Montreal.

"Personally," said Mazzoni, "I prefer a little fresh lemon juice instead of the wine vinegar. And in that case I add a touch of freshly-ground black pepper."

"Have another glass of wine," said Davico.

I did.

"What's actually in your salads?" I asked.

"We make three salads," said Davico. "The Regular, the Capriccio Special and the Chef's Salad. In the Special there's salami, ham, cheese, Swiss Emmenthal, celery, radishes, chives, topped with shrimp and black olives."

"The usual things," said Mazzoni. "Of course Giacomo brings them in every day fresh from his own garden. He also grows his own aromatic herbs, rosemary, sage, parsley, basil. Amazing fragrance when you pinch a couple of leaves right off the growing plant."

'AL DENTE STUFF'

"Bring your wine back to the kitchen," said Davico. "I'll show you how I make our Green Lasagna, Emilia style."

In his spotless kitchen he pointed to a large blending machine. "The lasagna pasta goes in there," he said. "That's just a paste of flour, spinach, egg and salt."

He pointed out a small, gleaming pasta machine. "This rolls the lasagna into strips, for boiling. Afterwards, you build layers of lasagna, meat sauce and Bechamel sauce and grated Parmesan until the pan is full. Bake to a golden brown."

I interrupted him. "What's this *al dente* stuff Bruno Gerussi is using in his spaghetti?"

"It's not stuff," said Mazzoni. "*Al dente* means to the tooth, with a nerve, not overcooked, *alla Romana*. Rice and spaghetti should always be cooked *al dente*. Too many restaurants have them ready, pre-cooked. That's why they're fat, full of water."

Davico opened a refrigerator and lifted out a huge sirloin. He looked at the meat lovingly. "Isn't that beautiful?"

"He buys only the best," said Mazzoni. "The steak here is the best buy in town. A small sirloin for \$2.75, a medium cut for \$4 and a New York cut—it's that thick—for \$5. If I were coming here to eat as a customer—I'd order the steak."

Next Davico produced a huge wheel of cheese stamped Parmigiano Reggiano. "Real Parmesan," said Mazzoni. "He has to import it in these 80-pound wheels at \$2 a pound."

He broke off a piece for me to taste.

"For eating, it's never cut with a knife. You must break off a piece, to preserve the texture."

Back in the dining room we finished off another bottle of wine. "Of course," said Davico, "there is a Berlin wall between cooking in Northern Italy and Southern Italy. South of Florence you get into more oil, more spices, then the famous Roman sauces, Alfredo, Carbonara, Amatriciana, Scarpara."

COOK IT IN FRENCH

"The Roman sauces are good," said Mazzoni. "Prepared at the table, as they should be. But the French are masters of the sauce. Even in Italy, the language of the kitchen is French. If you don't know it—you must learn it."

For a moment, I thought I had stumbled on the secret of Italian cooking. You had to cook in French.

A few minutes later I wasn't so sure. While Davico was cooking me one of his specials, I ate a plate of antipasto, Italian ham, tomato, black olives, pickled cauliflower, cucumber, cheese, salami, mushrooms and those little green peppers from Venice. To wash all this down, I was forced to order a bottle of wine. Valpolicella Negrar, an unpretentious, little wine, at only \$5.75 a bottle.

The veal scaloppini was the best I ever tasted. "Better give me the recipe for that," I said, "and the secrets of cooking it."

"Very simple," said Davico. "Take some veal, roll it in flour—"

"How much veal?" I asked.

"Oh, about that much," said Davico, holding out his hands. "Then you simmer it in butter with mushrooms—"

"How much butter?"

"Couple of lumps. For the last few minutes, stir in some table cream."

I was writing the recipe down. "Is that everything?"

"I almost forgot," said Davico. Throw in some Marsala wine, a few pinches of salt and pepper. Make sure it's the dry Marsala, not the sweet."

I made a careful note about the Marsala. It's these little things, obviously, about Italian recipes that make all the difference. Remember, dry Marsala in the scaloppini.

While I was finishing off the Marsala—I mean the Valpolicella—Davico said, "What will you have for dessert?"

"You must have the *Zabaglione*," said Mazzoni. "It's one of our best. With a couple of sweet biscuits—Pavesini—very famous in Italy."

I looked at my watch. "I'm afraid I haven't got time," I

said. "I've barely got time to get on to the next Italian restaurant for dinner."

ALWAYS THIRSTY

"*E sempre l'ora dei Pavesini*," laughed Mazzoni. "It's an Italian expression. There's always time for Pavesini. Bring your wine to the kitchen and watch him make the *zabaglione*."

Davico threw some egg yolks and sugar into a small pot and placed it on top of another pot full of boiling water. "I'm doing it in a *bagno-maria*," he explained. "Keeps it from burning."

"Looks just like a double-boiler," I said.

Next he took a bottle of Marsala wine and dumped some into the small pot, while stirring it. Stirring the egg yolks, I mean. The whole thing began to foam. Davico put a couple of caramelized peaches into a champagne glass and emptied the pot into the champagne glass, and topped it off with a couple of small biscuits.

It was delicious.

However, I was getting a bit confused about the Marsala wine. "Let's see now," I said, getting my notebook out again, "in the dry Marsala you put veal scaloppini."

"No, no," said Davico. "You put dry Marsala in the veal scaloppini."

"In the *zabaglione*," he continued, "it doesn't matter. You can use either sweet or dry Marsala, there."

It's a good thing we got that straightened up. It's the little touches that count in Marsala cooking. I mean, Italian cooking.

Somehow, I found my way across town to George's Spaghetti House, at 290 Dundas St. E. I was just in time for dinner. One thing I was discovering about Italian food—half an hour after you've eaten, you're thirsty again.

Over a carafe of Chianti, I discussed the dinner I was about to eat with the maitre d', Leo Mascarin.

I found the menu a little confusing. Two hundred entries. Twenty-five kinds of pizza, alone.

"For you," said Mascarin, "something special, something not on the menu. We have customers who come in

and just say to me, 'Do it.' They leave it all to me."

"First," he went on, "I'd like you to try the shrimps *Alla Mugnaia*, with a half-bottle of *Verdicchio*, a nice white wine."

The platter of jumbo shrimps looked almost too good to eat. They'd been fried in butter, garlic, parsley and lemon juice, pre-cut, so they curled up on the plate like butterflies. The taste was indescribable.

A SEEP ONLY

"One other thing," said Mascarin, "a *seep* of flour on the dressing. A seep, only. It is these 'leetle' things, like slicing the shrimp so they absorb more the flavor of the sauce."

Next came a main dish which was a combination of *Nodini Alla Montanara* and *Involtini Provinciale*. Without bogging down in a lot of unnecessary detail, the recipe for these is Italian ham, wrapped in slices of veal, melted cheese and some other things. The *Nodini* was cooked in butter, flour and red wine; the *Involtini* in tomato sauce, garlic and white wine.

"There are only two wines you may drink with this," said Mascarin.

"One is Barbera, a dry red. The other is Barolo, a very dry red. Which would you like?"

I thought about it for a long time, but I couldn't make up my mind. "Maybe I better have both," I said finally. "Until I get the hang of Italian eating."

This proved a wise decision, as it took me so long to get through the main course and a side dish of *Fetuccinni Verdi. Alla Bolognese Saute*. The food was wonderful to start with—and it tasted better with every glass I drank.

"The secret of Italian cooking," said Mascarin, "is many things."

"You begin with the quality of the vegetables and the meat—even the cut of the meat—the way it is cut is important. Then the timing of the cooking. I am lucky with the chef here. Five seconds too much, five seconds too little—it is no good. And the service is part of this timing. Getting it to the table at exactly the moment."

He turned up his hands. "There is only one thing wrong here—no service table for the sauces, the final touches. We must bring the food directly from the kitchen. The problem is too many customers."

I nearly choked on my wine. I'd never heard a maitre d' complaining about too many customers.

Mascarin explained. "To make room for a service table, I must remove a table for customers. On Saturday night—when they're lined up outside—that costs the room \$50."

I made my way home with the happy feeling of a job well done. There may be a lot of secrets about Italian cooking, but I'd sure as hell discovered the main secret. Wine.

Wots of wine. I mean, lots of wine.

I don't care if the Drink Editor ever comes back. Fool Editor, I mean. No, I mean, Food Editor.

Hic.

Chapter 19

AN ASSIGNMENT IN MOSCOW

Dateline: Moscow 1964

Like Russia itself, the Hotel Ukraina puts its best face forward. Along the wide front of the hotel are three gray towers. The central, largest tower soars thirty-four stories, with progressive setbacks, to a height of 650 feet, where its mast is topped with a red illuminated star. The only higher building in Moscow is the Moscow State University.

From the side the Hotel Ukraina is less impressive. Its bulk stretches out behind the façade at a mere five-story level, somewhat suggesting a Potemkin village.

However, I did not get a good look at the Ukraina from outside for several days after I moved in. During this time, perhaps because I happen to like ancient hotels, the idea became fixed in my mind that the hotel's grandeur dated back to czarist days. One morning, standing in the lobby, I mentioned my enjoyment of the old-fashioned Ukraina atmosphere to my Intourist guide, a spectacled young man named Yuri Grisenko.

Yuri was not amused. Coldly, he said, "The Ukraina is one of our most modern hotels. It has 1,026 rooms. It is the largest hotel in Europe."

At that moment, about twenty feet away, a uniformed porter was using an old-fashioned Russian teapot to water the red rug at the main entrance of the largest hotel in Europe. The edges of this long, red welcome carpet were worn threadbare and they curled up; they had to be watered down regularly to save the unwary guest from tripping on them.

When I arrived at the Ukraina I was groggy from two sleepless days and nights, the result of various airline schedules and airport strikes. I fetched up against the registration desk and announced myself. Behind the desk was an icy Russian blonde.

"Voosher," she said, barely moving her lips.

"Zhoornaleest," I replied, using my only Russian word.

"Voosher," she said impatiently. "Voosher."

"I speak only English."

This made her really angry. "I am speaking English," she said. "Voosher."

From behind me in the growing line-up, an English businessman said, "I think she wants your Intourist voucher."

Now it all came back to me. I was already snarled in Red tape. Before getting a Russian visa you must pay in advance for all Russian meals and hotel accommodations, in my case (I am a Canadian) a substantial \$1,026 in United States funds. Upon payment, New York Intourist gives you your voucher. Although I had received the number of my voucher by wire, I had left Toronto before the document arrived. Fortunately, the Russian Embassy in Ottawa had issued my visa on the strength of the number. Unfortunately, I had left the number with the Embassy.

"No voucher," I said. "I mean, no *voosher*."

The blond bureaucrat knew better. No one could possibly get into the middle of Moscow without a voucher.

"You must have *voosher*," she declared. "Look in pockets."

"No *voosher*," I explained. "Only number."

"All right," she said. "What is number?"

"I forget."

Taking a deep breath, she took my passport, checked my face against my picture, and put it away in a drawer. I wondered if I was already under arrest. But she made an entry in her register and said, "Room 1724."

As I turned away, she said, "Wait a moment." She took a slip of paper, carefully wrote "Room 1724" on it, and handed it to me.

A porter put my bags on a cart, and we headed for the elevators at the rear of the lobby. There are two elevator banks in the Ukraina. The three cars on the left serve the first five floors. The three on the right are supposed to serve all the other floors up to the thirty-fourth—a flight of madness on the part of some Soviet planner, for which I hope he has paid the price. I became an old man waiting for those elevators.

Their occasional arrival in the lobby can only be compared to the appearance of circus automobiles that disgorge body after body to the fanfare of trumpets. It was no surprise to me that one or more each day were closed for repairs.

Eventually my porter and I arrived on the seventeenth floor. Directly opposite the elevators on each floor is a large desk. This is manned by a *djezhurnaja*, or floor lady, twenty-four hours a day. Her job is to watch over the room keys, the chambermaids and, I suspect, the guests. This one was particularly grim-lipped. A red Communist Party pennant hung from a small stand on her desk.

The porter deposited my bags in my room. To my relief he was not offended when I tipped him with a package of Canadian cigarettes. Instead he smiled and backed out, saying, "*Spaseeba. Bolshoi spaseeba.*"

The room was furnished in a style I came to recognize as Russian Instant Antique. There were twin beds, a round table with a fringed cloth and lamp, a small desk with a dial telephone, a radio loudspeaker and a built-in wooden wardrobe. The floor was parquet. Three long casement windows gave on the curving Moskva River, where hydrofoils, ferries, freighters and barges overtook one another.

The taps in the bathroom were nickel-plated and massive, reminiscent of the Savoy in London, even to the large heated towel rack, a two-inch pipe too hot to touch. The rack acted as a radiator right through the 90° heat of summer, and I was never able to find anyone with the authority to shut it off.

In a way, this was good, I guess. Only two small towels came with the room, and they were always wet because I was always taking cold showers because the towel rack always made the room too hot.

I discovered my towel privileges in a round-about way. I was invited to play tennis at the Central Moscow Tennis Club and I took along one of my towels because there are none at the club. I had taken the same towel on a picnic the day before, and it was getting a little grubby. Looking at it, a friendly Russian tennis player said, "You know, you are entitled to a clean towel every three days

—you can insist on it.”

The bathtub in Room 1724 had a Rube Goldberg shower, and even a metal plug. Plugs, or the lack of plugs, are one of the inexplicable mysteries of communism. Most tubs and sinks do not have them. James Cameron, author of *Mandarin Red*, has succeeded in *not* finding plugs in all Iron Curtain countries, including Albania, and recently reported their disappearance from the Havana Libre, in Cuba. Somehow this must be connected with the onset of socialism.

There was only one ashtray in the room, and no blandishment seemed able to change this situation. I was a little more successful in upsetting the laundry system. Ordinarily the laundry was taken away and returned on set days. I found a jolly fat chambermaid who was delighted to do my wash in return for a ballpoint pen and a few other tips. At my request she even stopped starching my shorts.

There is, I understand, one dry-cleaning establishment in Moscow, imported *in toto* from the United States, which is good. But I was warned by a hotel resident not to allow the hotel staff to attempt any emergency dry cleaning for me. They had removed a spot from his suit coat but they had rubbed a hole in the fabric.

The dial telephone was not very useful. There is, so far as I could discover, no such thing as a Moscow telephone directory. There are also no hotel switchboards. This makes it possible to dial directly a room in another hotel, except that I was never able to find the numbers I wanted to call. It was simpler to get along without the telephone.

The Russians appear to make some use of telephones for surveillance. Mine would ring at odd times, early in the morning or late at night, or when I had just made a trip for mail to the Canadian Embassy. Sometimes the line would be dead when I answered, sometimes there would be a click, sometimes a voice would try to speak to me in Russian. Apparently this happens to everyone who stays in Moscow for any length of time. An old Moscow hand said to me. “I don’t know why they do it. Perhaps it’s to get your voice on tape—perhaps just to let you know

they’re on the job.”

In my own case, I don’t seem to have merited much special attention. During the day I was photographing and interviewing Heroes of Soviet Sport, whenever I could track them down through the maze of Soviet bureaucracy. Yuri, my Intourist Guide, would pick me up at the Ukraina in the morning and see me back when our day’s work was done. For the evenings, I was free to wander around Moscow.

In the light of a remark made to me by a young *stilyagi*, I guess this freedom was more real than illusory. “Hal” he said. “What do they care about you? What are you going to learn? You don’t even speak Russian.”

However, I cannot honestly recommend the Ukraina for anyone seriously interested in spying, if only because of the difficulty of getting in and out of the hotel. Sometimes it took an hour to get from my room to the main entrance. Partly, this was because of the ubiquitous queues, as common in the hotel as throughout Moscow.

Buying a stamp means queuing up at the stamp desk. You also queue up to send a cable, buy rubles or order an Intourist car at the service bureau. But if a man were on the run from SMERSH, it’s the elevators that would do him in. True, there is an effort to make you comfortable while you wait for them. On each floor near the elevators there is a large round table, with an ashtray and easy chairs. But after a few weeks I found it impossible to sit down and smoke quietly until the elevator came. I had to pace up and down, counting my steps, like a prisoner in a cell.

I once remarked to another guest that I probably could get to the seventeenth floor faster if I used the stairs.

“But there are no stairs,” he said.

“No stairs?”

He shrugged. “I’ve stayed here many times. I’ve never found any.”

Immediately I began to have nightmares about jumping from the seventeenth story in case of fire.

There was one *djezhurnaja* on the night shift on the seventeenth floor who spoke a little English, and I asked

her if it was true that there were no stairs in the Ukraina.

"No, no. We have stairs."

"Where?"

She looked around to make sure no other employees were in the area; then she took a large key from her desk. She led me down the hall and unlocked one of two solid wooden doors. I looked in. There was a concrete staircase leading up and down.

"In the night," she said, "we lock them at every floor. But in the daytime they are locked only on every fifth floor. Then, if you want, you can walk up two floors, or down two floors."

I struggled to grasp all this. "Why are they locked at all?"

"To protect the guests. People might wander in off the street and walk up the stairs."

Under security conditions such as these, it is a little unbelievable to me, even now, that one night I succeeded in bringing a beautiful blonde up to my room for drinks. She was named Tamara or Natasha, I forget which, and she was either a Russian girl who spoke very good English, or an American girl who spoke very good Russian.

I was dining at the Aragvi, a Georgian restaurant, and to while away the time between courses I was sketching the other patrons.

Tamara, if that was her name, was sitting with a group at a nearby table, and when I finished drawing her she joined me to see her sketch and to talk for a while. Her conversation was mostly about the sufferings of the Russian people and how she longed to do something for them.

A few hours later, when I stopped in at the coffee bar of the Ukraina for a coffee nightcap, I had forgotten both the sufferings and Tamara. Suddenly, to my surprise, I was greeted by Tamara, who was behind me in the queue with her companions from the Aragvi. It may have been just coincidence. After all, the Ukraina is one of the few places in Moscow where you can get something to eat after midnight.

Tamara was gay. "I don't want any more coffee," she announced. "What I would like is another drink."

I suggested we go up to my room, it being one of the few places in Moscow where you could get something to drink after midnight. Besides, I was getting curious about the small tape recorder she was carrying around, half hidden in some folded newspapers.

Her companions did not want any more to drink, so Tamara and I set off for Room 1724 by ourselves. No one questioned us, not even my floor lady. As soon as Tamara was in the room, she placed her tape recorder, still covered by newspapers, in the middle of my bed and said, "Now let us talk."

First I began to play some music on my own tape recorder, which was sitting on the table. I had not brought any romantic music, but I did have a tape featuring such country-music greats as Kitty Wells, Johnny Cash and the late Hank Williams, to which I had added a few personal favorites, such as the Andrews Sisters in *Rum and Coca Cola* and the Spike Jones version of *Cigareets and Whuskey and Wild, Wild Women*. It's nice loud music the way I play it.

Next, I fixed Tamara one of my special Moscow cocktails, consisting of vodka and water with a lime Fizzy tablet dropped into it. She was fascinated with the way the Fizzy tablet gave off bubbles.

"We can't talk," she said, "with that loud music."

"Then let's play chess," I said. I brought out my board and began setting up the pieces.

"We can't play chess with that loud music," said Tamara.

"I always play chess to music," I said. "You get used to it."

"But I don't like it."

"It's an acquired taste," I said "Perhaps you'll learn to like it."

She stood up. "Unless you turn off the music I am leaving."

I turned the music up louder. "Just give it a chance."

Tamara gathered up her newspapers and tape recorder and stalked toward the door. "I see, Mr. Carroll, you are nothing but an individualist. You are a lucky man." And with these cryptic words, she left.

By Western standards the food in the best Moscow restaurants and hotels is of poor quality and poorly prepared. One evening I watched a little old lady from New York struggling gallantly to cut her beef filet. After five minutes she gave up, saying, "Maybe you're not supposed to eat it—it's just for decoration." She drank her tea and left, adding, "I'll just order something from room service in the morning."

She had just arrived and didn't know there was no such thing as room service. I didn't have the heart to tell her right then.

Not all the Ukraina food was that bad. I enjoyed the black caviar appetizers, the cold sliced salmon and the Russian ice-cream sundaes which are served with jams or fruits. Only once was I stopped dead, and that time, ironically, by a specialty of the house: Ukrainian borscht. I had it cold, and there was just too much grease floating on it and too many unidentifiable ingredients.

However, of all the entertainments in the grand dining room of the Hotel Ukraina, eating is the least.

Your first dinner there is likely to be one of the great traumatic experiences of your life. Later on, you will derive great pleasure from watching the disbelief on the faces of other newly arrived guests as they undergo their exposure to the fare.

The dining room is more than a hundred feet long and grandly furnished. At the far end is a dance floor surrounded by eight huge marble pillars. From the vaulted ceiling, sixty feet above, hang eight enormous crystal chandeliers sparkling with hundreds of white, yellow and orange electric lights. A vast mural covers the ceiling with rearing Cossacks at one end and the modern buildings of the new Soviet rising from clouds of glory at the other.

But when your eyes descend to the human beings in these grandiose surroundings, your mind begins to reel. My own first impression was that I had somehow slipped back in time to the middle of the revolution. This motley mob must have just swarmed in from the streets.

Here to my right is a busty blonde bulging from a tight red sweater, resembling the classic figure of a tart. Her dinner partner, a slick-haired boy who must be either son

or *maquereau*, slouches nearly horizontal in his chair, picking his teeth. At the base of the forty-foot window curtains on the far wall is a dwarflike man who is bellowing like a bull as he recounts some grievance to a companion equally drunk. Near the dance floor are two young girls with the beehive hairdos popular in Paris four years ago. They wear eyeliner but no other makeup. Their boy-friends are buying them sweet liqueurs from a wagon pushed by a waitress, and the girls drink delicately, with the little finger extended.

An orchestra begins to play. The pianist, a plump woman in a print dress, dominates the front of the stage, her back to the audience. The five male musicians, in shirt-sleeves and without ties, begin to blow. The melody emerges as *Muskrat Ramble*. The music unsettles my grasp of time even more, as it is embellished with every little lick of the 78-r.p.m. records of the 1930's, from which it has been learned.

Here and there is a Finnish or Italian or German businessman, incredible in a conventional business suit. Such is their sartorial isolation they seem almost like wax figures. Adding to the feeling of a society in ferment is a cluster of African students, a Tibetan monk, a Russian army officer, and an Uzbekistan woman wearing the traditional *khalat*, a sack dress shot with brilliant zigzags of red, white, blue and black.

There is a Russian expression meaning, "The full glass, the full life," and at most tables the full life is being vigorously pursued. The vodka is served in small carafes, usually 100 or 200 grams at a time. One hundred grams is about three and a half ounces. The vodka is used for toasts and always downed in one gulp. As chasers there are bottles of beer or soda water, wine or even soft drinks. Soviet champagne, at three or four dollars a bottle, is relatively cheap, and corks are popping around the room.

A young man in his twenties, with a pretty Russian girl, insists on opening a bottle of champagne himself. He wants to thumb the cork out so it will pop to the ceiling. It sticks halfway, a geyser splashes in his face and soaks the front of his shirt, while his girl friend ducks. They both laugh uproariously.

It is practically impossible to obtain ice with drinks in Moscow. But two ordinary white kitchen refrigerators stand against the wall, an incongruous note in these elegant surroundings, as they frequently are in other Moscow dining rooms.

Am I still waiting for the maître d'hôtel to show me to a table? Yes. There is a maître, in black tie and jacket and with shaven skull. Apparently it is no part of his duties to find me a seat. There are empty tables bearing miniature flags of Hungary and Poland and other People's Democracies, but when I approach them, the maître waves me off abruptly with a single word, "*Delegazione!*" This accomplished, he again wanders off, leaving me to find a seat myself.

Waiters in white jackets and without ties wander slowly about, indulging in long arguments with customers and each other. One table is apparently reserved for their exclusive use, and several waiters and waitresses are sitting around it chatting and smoking. One old waiter is sitting in a chair fast asleep, his head lolled back against a huge marble pillar.

As I learned later, it is the custom in Moscow to join the tables of complete strangers when other seats are not available. It leads to wonderfully bizarre dinners. That first evening I end up with an Italian businessman who is installing Italian machinery in a Russian factory where, he says, it is constantly being broken by heavy-handed workmen; a homosexual from New York who is desolate because he has not brought his black poodle with him; two East German workers who have won a vacation for their productivity; and all of us at a large table with a group of Armenian party members who are literally having a picnic in the middle of the grand Ukraina dining room, with food and liquor they brought with them.

By turns the Armenians go up to their hotel room and bring back baskets of fresh ripe tomatoes, bigger than any ever seen in Moscow stores, along with cucumbers, pickles, red peppers and bottles of fine Armenian brandy, the best in Russia. The waiter is troubled only for additional glasses, as we are absorbed into the picnic. The hospitality and camaraderie grow in a kind of communication

that might be described as Pidgin Everything. The brandy is downed like vodka. The toasts, with simultaneous translations, stretch out to five minutes and more. The orchestra plays Armenian songs, which are even more melancholy than the Russian.

All too soon the tables begin to empty, the dining room is closing and the orchestra strikes up the last dance, their theme number. It is the *Colonel Bogey March*.

Overcome by sentiment and brandy, I weave my way to the seventeenth floor, where the *djezhurnaja* is dozing in her chair, having changed into her nightgown and dressing gown. No longer is she the grim-lipped keeper of the keys. She is warm, inviting womanhood. When she offers the key, I sweep her into my arms, rocking the Communist Party pennant on its little stand, and kiss her soundly.

She struggles and whispers, "Crazy mans! There are *others* on this floor!"

I take my key and retreat into Room 1724. It is strange how a mere whisper can bring a drunk to his senses.

One of the first things you notice about Moscow is the cleanliness of the streets. This is partly brought about by an army of old women with twig brooms, but it's also partly because of the two-foot white metal spittoon-ashtrays that dot the city. All litterbugs must have been liquidated, because Soviet citizens walk well out of their way to deposit cigarette butts and bits of paper in these receptacles.

There were several in the lobby of the Ukraina. If you should ever go there, you *may* find one directly in front of the three elevators that service the upper floors. If it is still there in that convenient spot, I should like it known that I am the man responsible.

Smoking is forbidden in the Ukraina elevators, a rule with which I did not quarrel after discovering the doors to the stairs were locked on every floor at night. However, most of the world's elevators have a convenient ashtray nearby. Not the Ukraina. For some mysterious reason the nearest was thirty or forty feet away, around the corner of the elevator bank. The elevator service was so slow that most smokers would light up while waiting.

When the elevator came finally, the smokers would have to walk to the ashtray, butt their cigarettes and return.

The constant flow of new guests complicated the situation. Many would attempt to enter the elevator while smoking. The operator would bar the way. The guests would go away and frequently fail to find the ashtray because it was around the corner. They would return. Another argument. The operator and the guest would then go away together. Meanwhile the twenty other elevator passengers waited.

This finally became too much for me. One day I lifted the ashtray, with its swishing load of cigarette butts and debris, and banged it down in front of the elevators, where it belonged. When I returned that night, it was back in its original position. I put it in front of the elevators again. When I came down for dinner it was gone. I put it back.

Now it became a point of honor with me never to leave or enter the elevators without moving the ashtray. In the middle of the operation one day, I met the enemy. She was a large, powerful Russian, an elevator operator but also apparently a senior one. She placed herself in my path and refused to budge. I tried to go around her, but she blocked my path again. "*Nyet*," she said, shaking her head.

It is undignified to argue with a woman in a hotel lobby, while clutching a huge and heavy white spittoon to your bosom, but I said "Why? Why?"

She pointed at the ashtray, held her nose, and said, "*Nyet. Nyet.*"

At last I had a reason. It's true the spittoon was full of refuse and smelled evilly. The obvious answer was that it should be cleaned more frequently, but I didn't know enough Russian to argue that point. I simply waited until the enemy had to take her elevator upstairs, and then I moved the ashtray back where it belonged.

From then until the day of my departure, I carried on the struggle. However, when I came in that final evening, I was preoccupied and, for the first time in weeks, walked by the white receptacle.

There was a small desk near the elevators, and a half

dozen elevator operators and other members of the hotel staff were usually gathered around it. While I was waiting for the elevator, I heard a burst of Russian and some laughter from that direction.

I looked over. They were all watching me expectantly. One of the elevator girls smiled and jabbed her finger at the ashtray. Her meaning was unmistakable and I quickly walked over, hoisted the thing for the last time and placed it squarely in front of the elevators. There were approving smiles from those at the desk.

When the next elevator arrived, the girl who had made the gesture came and took the controls. As soon as I entered, she closed the doors and pushed the controls for the seventeenth floor.

"For you," she said, "*express.*"

My flight was an early one, so I came down the following morning at five. I looked for the white ashtray and it was there, right where I had placed it.

Perhaps it was only a sentimental gesture for a departing guest. Perhaps it is there yet.

THE END



JOCK CARROLL is a two-way man, whose stories and photos have appeared in many newspapers and magazines. He was born in Toronto on March 5, 1919, and his work has taken him around much of the world.

This is his third published book. The first was KOREAN BOY. The second was THE SHY PHOTOGRAPHER, a bawdy novel of the magazine business, which is under movie option. For some time he has been working on the official biography of Greg Clark, dean of Canadian newspapermen.

His wife, Joy, is also a journalist and novelist. They live in Toronto with their 4 children. Anne, 18, Barbara, 16, Scott, 14 and Angus 12. They have 3 black cats.

Carroll was an outstanding high-school athlete, playing hockey, football and lacrosse. During the war he became an R.C.A.F. pilot. He now plays golf, handball and chess. At the Toronto Men's Press Club he is one of two current chess champions. He is a member of the Author's League of America; the Professional Photographers Association of Canada; the Ontario Sports Writers Association and president of the Canadian War Correspondents Association.

